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BY

SAMUEL HORSLEY,

LL.D. F.R.S. F.A.S.

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SERMON I.

ST. JAMES, v. 8.

For the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.

TIME was, when I know not what mystical meanings were drawn, by a certain cabalistic alchymy, from the simplest expressions of holy writ—from expressions in which no allusion could reasonably be supposed to any thing beyond the particular occasion upon which they were introduced. While this phrensy raged among the learned, visionary lessons of divinity were often derived, not only from detached texts of Scripture, but from *single words*, — not from words only, but from *letters* — from the place, the shape, the posture of a letter; and the blunders of transcribers, as they have since proved to be, have been the groundwork of many a fine-spun meditation.

It is the weakness of human nature, in every instance of folly, to run from one extreme to its opposite. In later ages, since we have seen the futility of those mystic expositions in which the school of Origen so much delighted, we have been too apt to fall into the contrary error; and the same unwarrantable licence of figurative interpretation which they employed to elevate, as they thought, the plainer parts of Scripture, has been used, in modern times, in effect to lower the divine.

Among the passages which have been thus misrepresented by the refinements of a false criticism, are all those which contain the explicit promise of the coming of the Son of Man in glory, or in his kingdom; which it is become so much the fashion to understand of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman arms, within half a century after our Lord's ascension, that, to those who take the sense of Scripture from some of the best modern expositors, it must seem doubtful whether any clear prediction is to be found in the New Testament, of an event in which, of all others, the Christian world is the most interested.

As I conceive the right understanding of this phrase to be of no small importance, seeing the hopes of the righteous and the fears of the wicked rest chiefly on the explicit promises of our Saviour's coming, it is my present purpose to give the matter, as far as my abilities may be equal to it, a complete discussion: And although, from the nature of the subject, the disquisition must be chiefly critical, consisting in a particular and minute examination of the passages wherein the phrase in question occurs, yet I trust, that by God's assistance, I shall be able so to state my argument, that every one here, who is but as well versed as every Christian ought to be in the English Bible, may be a very good judge of the evidence of my conclusion. If I should sometimes have occasion, which will be but seldom, to appeal to the Scriptures in the original language, it will not be to impose a new sense upon the texts which I may find it to my purpose to produce; but to open and ascertain the meaning, where the original expressions may be more clear and determinate than those of our translation: And in these cases, the expositions

knowledge of the Scriptures, especially the Scriptures of the New Testament; and yet that knowledge of the Scriptures which is necessary to the understanding of these things, is what few in this country (I would hope) are too illiterate to attain. It is our duty to facilitate the attainment by clearing difficulties. It may be proper to state those we cannot clear, — to present our hearers with the interpretations that have been attempted, and to show where they fail, — in a word, to make them masters of the question, though neither they nor we may be competent to the resolution of it. This instruction would more effectually secure them against the poison of modern corruptions, than the practice, dictated by a false discretion, of avoiding the mention of every doctrine that may be combated, and of burying every text of doubtful meaning. The corrupters of the Christian doctrine have no such reserve. The doctrines of the divinity of the Son — the incarnation — the satisfaction of the cross as a sacrifice, in the literal meaning of the word — the Mediatorial intercession — the influences of the Spirit — the eternity of future punishment —

are topics of popular discussion with those who would deny or pervert these doctrines: And we may judge by *their* success what *our own* might be, if we would but meet our antagonists on their own ground. The common people, we find, enter into the force, though they do not perceive the sophistry of *their* arguments. The same people would much more enter into the internal evidence of the genuine doctrine of the gospel, if holden out to them, not in parts, studiously divested of whatever may seem mysterious, — not with accommodations to the prevailing fashion of opinions, — but entire and undisguised. Nor are the laity to shut their ears against these disputations, as niceties in which they are not concerned, or difficulties above the reach of their abilities; and least of all are they to neglect those disquisitions which immediately respect the interpretation of texts. Every sentence of the Bible is from God, and every man is interested in the meaning of it. The teacher, therefore, is to expound, and the disciple to hear and read, with diligence: And much might be the fruit of the blessing of God on their united exer-

tions. And this I infer, not only from a general consideration of the nature of the gospel doctrine, and the cast of the Scripture language, which is admirably accommodated to vulgar apprehensions, but from a fact which has happened to fall much within my own observation, — the proficiency, I mean, that we often find, *in some single science*, of men who have never had a liberal education, and who, except in that particular subject on which they have bestowed pains and attention, remain ignorant and illiterate to the end of their lives. The sciences are said, and they are truly said, to have that mutual connexion, that any one of them may be the better understood for an insight into the rest: And there is, perhaps, no branch of knowledge which receives more illustration from all the rest than the science of religion; — yet it hath, like every other, its own internal principles, on which it rests; with the knowledge of which, without any other, a great progress may be made. And these lie much more open to the apprehension of an uncultivated understanding than the principles of certain abstruse sciences, such as geometry, for

instance, or astronomy; in which I have known plain men, who could set up no pretensions to general learning, make distinguished attainments.

Under these persuasions, I shall not scruple to attempt a disquisition, which, on the first view of it, might seem adapted only to a learned auditory: And I trust that I shall speak to your understandings.

I propose to consider what may be the most frequent import of the phrase of "our Lord's coming." And it will, if I mistake not, appear, that the *figurative use* of it, to denote the time of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, is very rare, if not altogether unexampled, in the Scriptures of the New Testament; except, perhaps, in some passages of the book of Revelations: That, on the other hand, the use of it *in the literal sense* is frequent; warning the Christian world of an event to be wished by the faithful and dreaded by the impenitent, — a visible descent of our Lord from heaven, as visible to all the world as his ascension was to the apostles, — a coming

of our Lord in all the majesty of the Godhead, to judge the quick and dead, to receive his servants into glory, and send the wicked into outer darkness.

In the epistles of St. Paul, St. Peter, and St. James, we find frequent mention of the coming of our Lord, in terms which, like those of the text, may at first seem to imply an expectation in those writers of his speedy arrival. There can be no question that the coming of our Lord literally signifies his coming in person to the general judgment; and that it was sometimes used in this literal sense by our Lord himself, — as in the twenty-fifth chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel, where the Son of Man is described as coming in his glory — as sitting on the throne of his glory — as separating the just and the wicked, and pronouncing the final sentence. But, as it would be very unreasonable to suppose that the inspired writers, though ignorant of the times and seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power, could be under so great a delusion as to look for the end of the world in their own days, — for this reason it has been

imagined, that wherever, in the *epistles of the apostles*, such assertions occur as those I have mentioned, the coming of our Lord is not to be taken in the literal meaning of the phrase, but that we are to look for something which was really at hand when these epistles were written, and which, in some figurative sense, might be called his coming. And such an event the learned think they find in the destruction of Jerusalem; — which may seem, indeed, no insignificant type of the final destruction of the enemies of God and Christ; but if we recur to the passages wherein the approach of Christ's kingdom is mentioned, we shall find that in most of them, I believe it might be said in all, the mention of *the final judgment* might be of much importance to the writer's argument, while that of *the destruction of Jerusalem* could be of none. The coming of our Lord is a topic which the holy penmen employ, when they find occasion to exhort the brethren to a steady perseverance in the profession of the gospel, and a patient endurance of those trying afflictions with which the providence of God, in the first ages of the church, was pleased to exercise

his servants. Upon these occasions, to confirm the persecuted Christian's wavering faith — to revive his weary hope — to invigorate his drooping zeal — nothing could be more effectual than to set before him the prospect of that happy consummation, when his Lord should come to take him to himself, and change his short-lived sorrows into endless joy. On the other hand, nothing, upon these occasions, could be more out of season, than to bring in view an approaching period of increased affliction, — for such was the season of the Jewish war to be. The believing Jews, favoured as they were in many instances, were still sharers in no small degree, in the common calamity of their country. They had been trained by our Lord himself to no other expectation. He had spoken explicitly of the siege of Jerusalem as a time of distress and danger to the very elect of God. Again, if the careless and indifferent were at any time to be awakened to a sense of danger, the *last judgment* was likely to afford a more prevailing argument than the prospect of the *temporal ruin* impending over the Jewish nation, or indeed than any

thing else which the phrase of "our Lord's coming," according to any *figurative interpretation* of it, can denote. It should seem, therefore, that in all those passages of the epistles in which the coming of our Lord is holden out, either as a motive to patience and perseverance, or to keep alive that spirit of vigilance and caution which is necessary to make our calling sure, — it should seem, that in all these passages *the coming* is to be taken literally for our Lord's personal coming at the last day; and that the *figure* is rather to be sought in those expressions which, in their literal meaning, might seem to announce his immediate arrival. And this St. Peter seems to suggest, when he tells us, in his second epistle, that the terms of "soon" and "late" are to be very differently understood, when applied to the great operations of Providence, and to the ordinary occurrences of human life. "The Lord," says he, "is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness. One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." "Soon" and "late," are words whereby a comparison is rather intended of

the mutual proportion of different intervals of time, than the magnitude of any one by itself defined; and the same thing may be said to be coming either soon or late, according as the distance of it is compared with a longer or a shorter period of duration. Thus, although the day of judgment was removed undoubtedly by an interval of many ages from the age of the apostles, yet it might in their days be said to be at hand, if its distance from them was but a small part of its original distance from the creation of the world, — that is, if its distance then was but a small part of the whole period of the world's existence, which is the standard, in reference to which, so long as the world shall last, all other portions of time may be by us most properly denominated long or short. There is again another use of the words "soon" and "late," whereby any one portion of time, taken singly, is understood to be compared, not with any other, but with the number of events that are to come to pass in it in natural consequence and succession. If the events are few in proportion to the time, the succession must be slow, and the time may be

called long: If they are many, the succession must be quick, and the time may be called short in respect of the number of events, whatever be the absolute extent of it. It seems to be in this sense that expressions denoting speediness of event are applied by the sacred writers to our Lord's coming. In the day of Messiah the Prince, in the interval between our Lord's ascension and his coming again to judgment, the world was to be gradually prepared and ripened for its end. The apostles were to carry the tidings of salvation to the extremities of the earth: They were to be brought before kings and rulers, and to water the new-planted churches with their blood. — Vengeance was to be executed on the unbelieving Jews, by the destruction of their city, and the dispersion of their nation. The Pagan idolatry was to be extirpated, — the Man of Sin to be revealed. Jerusalem is yet to be trodden down: The remnant of Israel is to be brought back, — the elect of God to be gathered from the four winds of heaven. And when the apostles speak of that event as at hand which is to close this great scheme of Providence, — a

scheme in its parts so extensive and so various, — they mean to intimate how busily the great work is going on, and with what confidence, from what they saw accomplished in their own days, the first Christians might expect in due time the promised consummation.

That they are to be thus understood, may be collected from our Lord's own parable of the fig-tree, and the application which he teaches us to make of it. After a minute prediction of the distresses of the Jewish war, and the destruction of Jerusalem, and a very general mention of his second coming, as a thing to follow in its appointed season, he adds — "Now learn a parable of the fig-tree. When its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors." That *it* is near; — so we read in our English Bibles; and expositors render the word "it," by the *ruin foretold*, or the *desolation spoken of*. But what was the ruin foretold, or desolation spoken of? — The ruin of the Jewish nation

— the desolation of Jerusalem. What were all these things, which, when they should see, they might know *it* to be near? — All the particulars of our Saviour's detail; that is to say, the destruction of Jerusalem, with all the circumstances of confusion and distress with which it was to be accompanied. This exposition, therefore, makes, as I conceive, the desolation of Jerusalem the prognostic of itself, — the sign and the thing signified the same. The true rendering of the original I take to be — "So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that *He* is near at the doors." *He*, — that is, the Son of Man, spoken of in the verses immediately preceding, as coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. The approach of summer, says our Lord, is not more surely indicated by the first appearances of spring, than the final destruction of the wicked by the beginnings of vengeance on this impenitent people. The opening of the vernal blossom is the first step in a natural process which necessarily terminates in the ripening of the summer fruits; and the rejection of the Jews, and the adoption of the believing

Gentiles, is the first step in the execution of a settled plan of Providence which inevitably terminates in the general judgment. The chain of physical causes, in the one case, is not more uninterrupted, or more certainly productive of the ultimate effect, than the chain of moral causes in the other. "Verily, I say unto you, this generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled." "All these things," in this sentence, must unquestionably denote the same things which are denoted by the same words just before. Just before, the same words denoted those particular circumstances of the Jewish war which were included in our Lord's prediction. All those *signs* which answer to the fig-tree's budding leaves, the apostles and their contemporaries, at least some of that generation, were to see. But as the thing portended is not included among the signs, it was not at all implied in this declaration, that any of them were to live to see *the harvest, the coming of our Lord in glory.*

I persuade myself that I have shown, that our Lord's coming, wherever it is menti-

oned by the apostles in their epistles as a motive to a holy life, is always to be taken literally for his personal coming at the last day.

It may put the matter still farther out of doubt, to observe, that the passage where of all others, in this part of Scripture, a *figurative interpretation* of the phrase of "our Lord's coming" would be the most necessary, if the figure did not lie in the expressions that seem to intimate its near approach, happens to be one in which our Lord's coming cannot but be literally taken. The passage to which I allude is in the fourth chapter of St. Paul's first epistle to the Thessalonians, from the thirteenth verse to the end. The apostle, to comfort the Thessalonian brethren concerning their deceased friends, reminds them of the resurrection; and tells them, that those who were already dead would as surely have their part in a happy immortality as the Christians that should be living at the time of our Lord's coming. Upon this occasion, his expressions, taken literally, would imply that he included himself, with many

of those to whom these consolations were addressed, in the number of those who should remain alive at the last day. This turn of the expression naturally arose from the strong hold that the expectation of the thing in its due season had taken of the writer's imagination, and from his full persuasion of the truth of the doctrine he was asserting, — namely, that those who should die before our Lord's coming, and those who should then be alive, would find themselves quite upon an even footing. In the confident expectation of his own reward, his intermediate dissolution was a matter of so much indifference to him, that he overlooks it. His expression, however, was so strong, that his meaning was mistaken, or, as I rather think, misrepresented. There seems to have been a sect in the apostolic age, — in which sect, however, the apostles themselves were not, as some have absurdly maintained, included, — but there seems to have been a sect which looked for the resurrection in their own time. Some of these persons seem to have taken advantage of St. Paul's expressions in this passage, to represent him as favouring their opinion.

This occasioned the second epistle to the Thessalonians, in which the apostle peremptorily decides against that doctrine; maintaining that the Man of Sin is to be revealed, and a long consequence of events to run out, before the day of judgment can come; and he desires that no expression of his may be understood of its speedy arrival;—which proves, if the thing needed farther proof than I have already given of it, that the coming mentioned in his former epistle is the coming to judgment, and that whatever he had said of the day of coming as at hand, was to be understood only of the certainty of that coming.

The most difficult part of my subject yet remains,—to consider the passages in the gospel wherein the coming of our Lord is mentioned.

SERMON II.

MATTHEW, XXIV. 3.

Tell us when shall these things be; and what shall be the signs of thy coming, and of the end of the world?

I PROCEED in my inquiry into the general importance of the phrase of "the coming of the Son of Man" in the Scriptures of the New Testament.

I have shown, that in the epistles, wherever our Lord's coming is mentioned, as an expectation that should operate through hope to patience and perseverance, or through fear to vigilance and caution, it is to be understood literally of his coming in person to the general judgment. I have yet to consider the usual import of the

same phrase in the gospels. I shall consider the passages wherein a figure hath been supposed, omitting those where the sense is universally confessed to be literal.

When our Lord, after his resurrection, was pleased to intimate to St. Peter the death by which it was ordained that he should glorify God, St. Peter had the weak curiosity to inquire what might be St. John's destiny. "Lord, what shall this man do?" "Jesus saith unto him, if I will that he tarry till *I come*, what is that to thee? Follow thou me?" The disciples understood this answer as a prediction that St. John *was not to die;* which seems to prove, what is much to our purpose, that in the enlightened period which immediately followed our Lord's ascension, the expression of his coming was taken in its *literal meaning*. This interpretation of the reply to St. Peter, was set aside by the event. In extreme old age, the disciple whom Jesus loved was taken for ever to the bosom of his Lord. But the Christians of that time being fixed in a habit of interpreting the reply to St. Peter as a prediction

concerning the term of St. John's life, began to affix a figurative meaning to the expression of "our Lord's coming," and persuaded themselves that the prediction was verified by St. John's having survived the destruction of Jerusalem; and this gave a beginning to the practice which has since prevailed, of seeking figurative senses of this phrase wherever it occurs. But the plain fact is, that St. John himself saw nothing of prediction in our Saviour's words. He seems to have apprehended nothing in them but an answer of significant though mild rebuke to an inquisitive demand.

If there be any passage in the New Testament in which the epoch of the destruction of Jerusalem is intended by the phrase of "our Lord's coming," we might not unreasonably look for this figure in some parts of those prophetical discourses in which he replied to the question proposed to him in the words of the text, and particularly in the twenty-seventh verse of this twenty-fourth chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel; where our Saviour, in the middle of that

part of his discourse in which he describes the events of the Jewish war, says — "For as the lightning cometh out of the east and shineth unto the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be." And he adds, in the twenty-eighth verse — "For wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together." The disciples, when they put the question "Tell us when shall these things be; and what shall be the signs of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" imagined, no doubt, that the coming of our Lord was to be the epoch of the demolition with which he had threatened the temple. They had not yet raised their expectations to any thing above a temporal kingdom. They imagined, perhaps, that our Lord would come by conquest, or by some display of his extraordinary powers which should be equivalent to conquest, to seat himself upon David's throne; and that the destruction of the Jewish temple would be either the last step in the acquisition of his royal power, or perhaps the first exertion of it. The veil was yet upon their understandings; and the season not being come for taking it

entirely away, it would have been nothing strange if our Lord had framed his reply in terms accommodated to their prejudices, and had spoken of the ruin of Jerusalem as they conceived of it, — as an event that was to be the consequence of his coming, — to be his own immediate act, in the course of those conquests by which they might think he was to gain his kingdom, or the beginning of the vengeance which, when established in it, he might be expected to execute on his vanquished enemies. These undoubtedly were the notions of the disciples, when they put the question concerning the time of the destruction of the temple and the signs of our Lord's coming; and it would have been nothing strange, if our Lord had delivered his answer in expressions studiously accommodated to these prejudices: For as the end of prophecy is not to give curious men a knowledge of futurity, but to be in its completion an evidence of God's all-ruling providence, who, if he governed not the world, could not possibly foretell the events of distant ages, — for this reason, the Spirit which was in the prophets hath generally used a language

artfully contrived to be obscure and ambiguous, in proportion as the events intended might be distant, — gradually to clear up as the events should approach, and acquire *from* the events, when brought to pass, the most entire perspicuity; that thus men might remain in that ignorance of futurity which so suits with the whole of our present condition that it seems essential to the welfare of the world, and yet be overwhelmed at last with evident demonstrations of the power of God. It might have been expected that our Lord, in delivering a prediction, should assume the accustomed style of prophecy, which derives much of its useful ambiguity from *this* circumstance, — from an artful accommodation to popular mistakes, so far as they concern not the interest of religion: And much of this language indeed we find in our Lord's discourse. But with respect to his *own* coming, it seems to be one great object of his discourse, to advertise the Christian world that it is quite a distinct event from the demolition of the Jewish temple. This information is indeed conveyed in oblique insinuations, of which it might not be

intended that the full meaning should appear at the time when they were uttered. But when Christians had once seen Jerusalem with its temple and all its towers destroyed, the nation of the Jews dispersed, and our Lord, in a literal meaning, *not yet* come, — it is strange that they did not then discern, that if there be any thing explicit and clear in the whole of this prophetical discourse, it is *this* particular prediction, that during the distresses of the Jewish war the expectation of our Lord's immediate coming would be the reigning delusion of the times. The discourse is opened with this caution — "Take heed that no man deceive you: For many shall come in my name, saying — I am Christ; and shall deceive many." And the same caution is repeated in various parts of the prophecy, till he comes at last to speak (as I shall hereafter show) of his real coming as a thing to take place after the destined period should be run out of the desolation of the holy city. "If any man shall say unto you — Lo here is Christ, or there, — believe it not. If they shall say unto you — Behold he is in the desert, — go not forth;

Behold he is in the secret chambers, — believe it not. For as the lightning cometh out of the east and shineth unto the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be. "For," as it is added in St. Matthew, "wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together." Give no credit, says our Lord, to any reports that may be spread that the Messiah is come, — that he is in this place, or in that: My coming will be attended with circumstances which will make it public at once to all the world; and there will be no need that one man should carry the tidings to another. This sudden and universal notoriety that there will be of our Saviour's last glorious advent, is signified by the image of the lightning, which, in the same instant, flashes upon the eyes of spectators in remote and opposite stations. And this is all that this comparison seems intended or indeed fitted to express. It hath been imagined that it denotes the particular route of the Roman armies, which entered Judea on the eastern side, and extended their conquests westward. But had this been intended, the image should rather have been taken from

something which hath its natural and necessary course in that direction. The lightning may break out indifferently in any quarter of the sky; and east and west seem to be mentioned only as extremes and opposites. And accordingly, in the parallel passage of St. Luke's Gospel, we read neither of east nor west, but indefinitely of opposite parts of the heavens: "For as the lightning that lighteneth out of the one part under the heaven shineth unto the other part under heaven, so shall also the Son of Man be in *his day*." The expression "his day" is remarkable. The original might be more exactly rendered "his own day;" intimating, as I conceive, that the *day*, i. e. the time of the Son of Man, is to be exclusively his own, — quite another from the day of those deceivers whom he had mentioned, and therefore quite another from the day of the Jewish war, in which those deceivers were to arise.

Nevertheless, if it were certain that the eagles, in the next verse, denote the Roman armies, bearing the figure of an eagle on their standards, — if the carcass, round

which the eagles were to be gathered, be the Jewish nation, which was morally and judicially dead, and whose destruction was pronounced in the decrees of heaven, — if this were certain, it might then seem necessary to understand the coming of the Son of Man, in the comparison of the lightning, of his coming figuratively to destroy Jerusalem. But this interpretation of the eagles and the carcass I take to be a very uncertain though a specious conjecture.

As the sacred historians have recorded the several occurrences of our Saviour's life without a scrupulous attention to the exact order of time in which they happened, so they seem to have registered his sayings with wonderful fidelity, but not always in the order in which they came from him. Hence it has come to pass, that the heads of a continued discourse have, perhaps, in some instances, come down to us in the form of unconnected apothegms. Hence, also, we sometimes find the same discourse differently represented, in some minute circumstances, by different evangelists; and maxims the same in purport somewhat

differently expressed, or expressed in the same words, but set down in a different order; — circumstances in which the captious infidel finds occasion of perpetual cavil, and from which the believer derives a strong argument of the integrity and veracity of the writers on whose testimony his faith is founded. Now, wherever these varieties appear, the rule should be to expound each writer's narrative by a careful comparison with the rest.

To apply this to the matter in question. These prophecies of our Lord, which St. Matthew and St. Mark relate as a continued discourse, stand in St. Luke's narrative in two different parts, as if they had been delivered upon different though somewhat similar occasions. The first of these parts in order of time is made the latter part of the whole discourse in St. Matthew's narrative. The first occasion of its delivery was a question put by some of the Pharisees concerning the time of the coming of the kingdom of God. Our Lord having given a very general answer to the Pharisees, addresses a more particular discourse to his

disciples; in which, after briefly mentioning in highly figured language, the affliction of the season of the Jewish war, and after cautioning his disciples against the false rumours of his advent which should then be spread, he proceeds to describe the suddenness with which his real advent, the day of judgment, will at last surprise the thoughtless world. The particulars of this discourse we have in the seventeenth chapter of St. Luke's Gospel. The other part of these prophecies St. Luke relates as delivered at another time, upon the occasion which St. Matthew and St. Mark mention. When the disciples, our Lord having mentioned the demolition of the temple, inquired of him, — "When shall these things be; and what shall be the signs of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" our Lord answers their question, as far as it was proper to answer it. He gives a minute detail of those circumstances of the war which to that generation were to be the *signs of the last advent;* — not the thing itself, but the *signs* of it; for the beginning of the completion of a long train of prophecy is the natural sign and pledge of the completion

of the whole. He foretells the total dispersion of the Jews. He mentions briefly his own coming; of which, he says, the things previously mentioned would be no less certain signs than the first appearances of spring are signs of the season of the harvest. He affirms that the day and hour of his coming are known to none but the Father; and he closes the whole of this discourse with general exhortations to constant watchfulness, founded on the consideration of that suddenness of his coming of which he had given such explicit warning in his former discourse. The detail of this last discourse, or rather of so much of this discourse as was not a repetition of the former, we have in the twenty-first chapter of St. Luke's Gospel.

St. Matthew and St. Mark, the one in the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth, the other in the thirteenth chapter of his Gospel, give these prophecies in one entire discourse, as they were delivered to the apostles upon the occasion which they mention; but they have neither distinguished the part that was new from what had been delivered

before, nor have they preserved, as it should seem, so exactly as St. Luke, the original arrangement of the matter. In particular, St. Matthew has brought close together the comparison of the Son of Man's coming with a flash of lightning, and the image of the eagles gathered about the carcass. St. Mark mentions neither the one nor the other; whereas St. Luke mentions both, but sets them at the greatest distance one from the other. Both, as appears from St. Luke, belonged to the old part of the discourse; but the comparison of the lightning was introduced near the beginning of the discourse, — the image of the eagles and the carcass at the very end of it. Indeed this image did not belong to the prediction, but was an answer to a particular question proposed by the disciples respecting some things our Lord had said in the latter part of this prophecy. Our Saviour had compared the suddenness of the coming of the Son of Man to the sudden eruption of the waters in Noah's flood, and to the sudden fall of the lightning that consumed Sodom and Gomorrah. It is evident, from St. Matthew's relation, that the coming in-

tended in these similitudes is *that* coming of the time and hour of which none knows, said our Lord, "not even the Son, but the Father." But since the epoch of the destruction of Jerusalem was known to the Messiah by the prophetic spirit (for he said that it should take place before the generation with which he was living on earth should be passed away), the coming of which the time was *not* known to the Messiah by the prophetic spirit could be no other than the last personal advent. This, therefore, is the coming of which our Lord speaks in the seventeenth chapter of St. Luke's Gospel, and of which he describes the suddenness; and in the end of his discourse, he foretells some extraordinary interpositions of a discriminating Providence, which shall preserve the righteous, in situations of the greatest danger, from certain public calamities, which in the last ages of the world will fall upon wicked nations. "Of two men in one bed, one shall be taken and the other left. Two women grinding together, the one shall be taken and the other left. Two men shall be in the field, the one shall be taken and

the other left. And they said unto him — Where, Lord? And he said unto them — Wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together." It is probable that the eagle and the carcass was a proverbial image among the people of the East, expressing things inseparably connected by natural affinities and sympathies. "Her young ones suck up blood," says Job, speaking of the eagle; "and where the slain is, there is she." The disciples ask — Where, in what countries are these calamities to happen, and these miraculous deliverances to be wrought? Our divine instructor held it unfit to give farther light upon the subject. He frames a reply, as was his custom when pressed with unseasonable questions, which, at the same time that it evades the particular inquiry, might more edify the disciples than the most explicit resolution of the question proposed. "Wheresoever the carcass is, thither will the eagles be gathered together." Wheresoever sinners shall dwell, there shall my vengeance overtake them, and there will I interpose to protect my faithful servants. Nothing, therefore, in the similitude of the

lightning, or the image of the eagles gathered round the carcass, limits the phrase of "our Lord's coming," in the twenty-seventh verse of this twenty-fourth chapter of St. Matthew, to the figurative sense of his coming to destroy Jerusalem.

His coming is announced again in the thirtieth verse, and in subsequent parts of these same prophecies; where it is of great importance to rescue the phrase from the refinements of modern expositors, and to clear some considerable difficulties; which, it must be confessed, attend the literal interpretation. And to this purpose I shall devote a separate discourse.

SERMON III.

MATTHEW, XXIV. 3.

Tell us when shall these things be; and what shall be the signs of thy coming, and of the end of the world?

IT was upon the Wednesday in the Passion-week, that our Lord, for the last time retiring from the temple, where he had closed his public teaching with a severe invective against the hypocrisy of the Scribes and Pharisees, uttered to the apostles, remarking with admiration as they passed the strength and beauty of that stately fabric, that prediction of its approaching demolition which gave occasion to the question which is related in my text. When they reached the Mount of Olives, and Jesus was seated on a part of the hill

where the city and the temple lay in prospect before him, four of the apostles took advantage of that retirement to obtain, as they hoped, from our Lord's mouth, full satisfaction of the curiosity which his prediction of the temple's ruin had excited. Peter, James, John, and Andrew, came to him, and asked him privately — "Tell us when shall these things be; and what shall be the signs of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" To this inquiry our Lord was pleased to reply in a prophetical discourse of some considerable length, which takes up two entire chapters, the twenty-fourth and the twenty-fifth, of St. Matthew's Gospel; and yet is brief, if the discourse be measured by the subject, — if the length of speech be compared with the period of time which the prophecy embraces, commencing within a few years after our Lord's ascension, and ending only with the general judgment. This discourse consists of two principal branches. The first is the answer to the first part of the question, "When shall these things be?" — that is, — When shall this demolition of the temple be, which thou hast now foretold? And the second

branch of the discourse is the answer to the the second part of the question, "What shall be the signs of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" You will find, indeed, in some modern expositions, such a turn given to the expressions in which the apostles put their questions, as makes the two branches of the sentence, not two distinct questions, as they really are, but the same question differently expressed. You are told by these expositors, that by the end of the world, the apostles meant the end of that particular age during which the Jewish church and state were destined to endure. Such puerile refinements of verbal criticism might better become those blind leaders of the blind against whose bad teaching our Saviour warned the Jewish people, than the preachers of the gospel. Ask these expositors by what means they were themselves led to the discovery of a meaning so little obvious in the words, you will find that they have nothing to allege but what they call the idioms of the Jewish language; which, however, are no idioms of the language of the inspired penmen, but the idioms of the Rabbinical divines, — a set of despicable

writers, who strive to cover their poverty of meaning by the affected obscurity of a mystic style. The apostles were no Rabbins; they were plain artless men, commissioned to instruct men like themselves in the mysteries of God's kingdom. It is not to be believed that such men, writing for such a purpose, and charged with the publication of a general revelation, should employ phrases intelligible to none but Jews, and among the Jews themselves intelligible only to the learned. The word "end," by itself, indeed, may be the end of any thing; and may perhaps be used in this very part of Scripture, with some ambiguity, either for the end of all things, or the end of the Jewish state, or the end of any period which may be the immediate subject of discourse. But it is not to be believed that the end of the world, in the language of the apostles, may signify the end of any thing else, or carry any other meaning than what the words must naturally convey to every one who believes that the world shall have an end, and has never bewildered his understanding in the schools of the Rabbins. The apostles, therefore, in the text clearly ask

two questions: When will the temple be demolished, as thou hast threatened? and by what signs shall the world be apprized of thy coming, and of its approaching end? Our Lord's prophetical discourse contains such an answer as was meet for both these questions; and as the questions were distinctly propounded, the answers are distinctly given in the two distinct branches of the entire discourse.

I observed, in my last sermon upon this subject, that these prophecies of our Lord, which St. Matthew and St. Mark relate as a continued discourse, are related by St. Luke as if they had been delivered in two different parts, upon different though similar occasions. The truth is, that it was our Lord's custom, as appears from the evangelical history, not only to inculcate frequently the same maxims, and to apply the same proverbs in various senses, but to repeat discourses of a considerable length upon different occasions; as what is called his sermon on the Mount was at least twice delivered, and some of his parables were uttered more than once. It is a rule, how-

ever, with the evangelists, that each relates a discourse of any considerable length but once, without noticing the various occasions upon which it might be repeated; though different evangelists often record different deliveries of the same discourse. St. Luke having related in its proper place our Lord's answer to the inquiry of the Pharisees about the signs of the kingdom, omits, in his relation of our Lord's answer to the like inquiry of the apostles, what seemed little more than a repetition of what had been said upon the former occasion. St. Matthew and St. Mark have given the discourse in reply to the apostles more at length, without mentioning that our Lord had at any time before touched upon the same subject.

By comparing the parallel passages of these prophetical discourses, as they are related entire by St. Matthew, and in parts by St. Luke, I have already shown, that in the similitude of the lightning, by which our Lord represents the suddenness of his future coming, no allusion could be intended to the route of the Roman armies

when they invaded Palestine; and that the image of the eagles gathered round the carcass hath been expounded with more refinement than truth of the Roman standards planted round Jerusalem, when the city was besieged by Vespasian. No argument, therefore, can be drawn from these poetical allusions, that the coming of the Son of Man, which is compared to the flash of lightning, was what has been called his coming figuratively to destroy Jerusalem. I now proceed to consider the remaining part of these prophecies; and to show that the coming of the Son of Man, so often mentioned in them, can be understood of nothing but that future coming of our Lord which was promised to the apostles by the angels at the time of his ascension, — his coming visibly to judge the quick and dead.

Every one, I believe, admits that the coming of the Son of Man, foretold in the thirtieth verse of this twenty-fourth chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel, when the sign of the Son of Man is to be displayed in the heavens — when the tribes of the earth shall be seized with consternation, seeing him

coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory, — every one admits, that the coming thus foretold in the thirtieth verse is to succeed those disorders in the sun, moon, and stars, mentioned in the twenty-ninth. Darkness in the sun and moon, and a falling of the stars, were images in frequent and familiar use among the Jewish prophets, to denote the overthrow of great empires or the fall of mighty potentates; and there is nothing in the images themselves to connect them with one event of this kind rather than another. But if we recur to the parallel passage of St. Luke's Gospel, we shall find, that before these signs in the sun, moon, and stars, our Lord had mentioned that Jerusalem is to be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled; that is, till the time shall come for that accession of new converts from the Gentiles, which, as St. Paul intimates, is to follow the restoration of the converted Jews. "If the fall of them" (the Jews), says St. Paul, be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their fulness?" After he had men-

tioned this fulfilling of the times of the Gentiles, then, according to St. Luke, our Lord introduced those signs in the sun and the heavenly bodies. These signs, therefore, are not to take place till the time come for the fulfilling of the Gentiles, — not, therefore, till the restoration of the Jews, which is to be the beginning and the means of that fulfilling. They cannot, therefore, be intended to denote the beginnings of that dispersion of the Jews from which they are to be restored when these signs take place; nor can the coming of the Son of Man, which is still to succeed these signs, be his coming figuratively to effect that dispersion by the arms of Vespasian. The dispersion, I say, of the Jewish people, which by a considerable interval was to precede these signs, cannot be the same thing with the coming of the Son of Man, which is to follow them.

Upon these grounds, I conclude that, under the image of these celestial disorders, the overthrow of some wicked nations in the last ages is predicted; probably of some who shall pretend to oppose by force of

arms the return of the chosen race to the holy land, and the re-establishment of their kingdom. And if this be the probable interpretation of the signs in the sun and moon, the advent which is to succeed those signs can hardly be any other than the real advent at the last day.

In my first discourse upon this subject, I had occasion to obviate an objection that might be raised from the declaration which our Lord subjoins to his parable of the fig-tree: "This generation shall not pass away till all these things be fulfilled," I showed that the words "all these things" do not denote all the particulars of the whole preceding prophecy, but all the things denoted by the same words in the application of that parable, — namely, all the first signs which answer to the budding of the fig-tree's leaves.

Great stress has been laid upon the expressions with which, as St. Matthew reports them, our Lord introduces the mention of those signs in the sun and moon which are to precede his advent: "Immediately after the tribulation of those days, shall the sun

be darkened." The word "immediately" may seem to direct us to look for this darkness of sun and moon in something immediately succeeding the calamities which the preceding part of the prophecy describes: And as nothing could more immediately succeed the distresses of the Jewish war than the demolition of the city and the dispersion of the nation, hence, all that goes before in St. Matthew's narrative of these discourses, hath been understood of the distresses of the war, and these celestial disorders of the final dissolution of the Jewish polity in church and state; which catastrophe, it hath been thought, our Lord might choose to clothe in "figurative language, on purpose to perplex the unbelieving persecuting Jews, if his discourses should ever fall into their hands, that they might not learn to avoid the impending evil." But we learn from St. Luke, that before our Lord spoke of these signs, he mentioned the final dissolution of the Jewish polity, in the plainest terms, without any figure. He had said — "They" *i. e.* (as appears by the preceding sentence) this people "shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be

led away captive into all nations; and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles." And to what purpose should he afterwards propound in a figure what he had already described in plain words? or how could the figurative description, thus accompanied with the interpretation, serve the purpose of confounding and perplexing? I apprehend, that the whole difficulty which the word "immediately" is supposed to create, in that interpretation which refers the signs in the sun and moon to the last ages of the world, is founded on a mistake concerning the extent of that period of affliction which is intended by "the tribulation of those days." These words, I believe, have been always understood of those few years during which the Roman armies harassed Judea and besieged the holy city; whereas it is more agreeable to the general cast of the prophetic language, to understand them of the *whole* period of the tribulation of the Jewish nation, — that whole period during which Jerusalem is to be trodden down. This tribulation began indeed in those days of the Jewish war; but the period of it is at this day in its

course, and will not end till the time shall come, predetermined in the counsels of God, for the restoration of that people to their ancient seats. This whole period will probably be a period of affliction, not to the Jews only, but also in some degree to the Christian church; for not before the expiration of it will the true church be secure from persecutions from without — from corruption, schism, and heresy, within. But when this period shall be run out, — when the destined time shall come for the conversion and restoration of the Jewish people, — immediately shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light; great commotions and revolutions will take place among the kingdoms of the earth. Indeed, the re-establishment of the Jewish kingdom is, in the nature of the thing, not likely to be effected without great disturbances. By this interpretation, and I think in no other way, the parallel passages of St. Matthew, St. Mark, and St. Luke, may be brought exactly to one and the same meaning.

I shall now venture to conclude, notwith-

standing the great authorities which incline the other way, that the phrase of "our Lord's coming," wherever it occurs in his prediction of the Jewish war, as well as in most other passages of the New Testament, is to be taken in its literal meaning, as denoting his coming in person, in visible pomp and glory, to the general judgment.

Nor is the belief of that coming, so explicitly foretold, an article of little moment in the Christian's creed, however some who call themselves Christians may affect to slight it. It is true, that the expectation of a future retribution is what ought, in the nature of the thing, to be a sufficient restraint upon a wise man's conduct, though we were uninformed of the manner in which the thing will be brought about, and were at liberty to suppose that every individual's lot would be silently determined, without any public entry of the Almighty Judge, and without the formality of a public trial. But our merciful God, who knows how feebly the allurements of the present world are resisted by our reason, unless imagination can be engaged on rea-

son's side, to paint the prospect of future good, and display the terror of future suffering, hath been pleased to ordain that the business shall be so conducted, and the method of the business so clearly foretold, as to strike the profane with awe, and animate the humble and the timid. He hath warned us (and let them who dare to extenuate the warning ponder the dreadful curse with which the book of prophecy is sealed — "If any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life,") — God hath warned us that the inquiry into every man's conduct will be public — Christ himself the Judge — the whole race of man and the whole angelic host spectators of the awful scene. Before that assembly, every man's good deeds will be declared, and his most secret sins disclosed. As no elevation of rank will then give a title to respect, no obscurity of condition shall exclude the just from public honour, or screen the guilty from public shame. Opulence will find itself no longer powerful, — poverty will be no longer weak; birth will no longer be distinguished, — meanness will no longer

pass unnoticed. The rich and poor will indeed strangely meet together; when all the inequalities of the present life shall disappear, and the conqueror and his captive, the monarch and his subject, the lord and his vassal, the statesman and the peasant, the philosopher and the unlettered hind, shall find their distinctions to have been mere illusions. The characters and actions of the greatest and the meanest have in truth been equally important, and equally public; while the eye of the omniscient God hath been equally upon them all, — while all are at last equally brought to answer to their common Judge, and the angels stand around spectators, equally interested in the dooms of all. The sentence of every man will be pronounced by him who cannot be merciful to those who shall have willingly sold themselves to that abject bondage from which he died to purchase their redemption, —who, nevertheless, having felt the power of temptation, knows to pity them that have been tempted; by him on whose mercy contrite frailty may rely — whose anger hardened impenitence must dread. To heighten the solemnity and terror of the

business, the Judge will visibly descend from heaven, — the shout of the archangels and the trumpet of the Lord will thunder through the deep, — the dead will awake, — the glorified saints will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, while the wicked will in vain call upon the mountains and the rocks to cover them. Of the day and hour when these things shall be, knoweth no man; but the day and hour for these things are fixed in the eternal Father's counsels. Our Lord will come, — he will come unlooked for, and may come sooner than we think.

God grant, that the diligence we have used in these meditations may so fix the thought and expectation of that glorious advent in our hearts, that by constant watchfulness on our own part, and by the powerful succour of God's Holy Spirit, we may be found of our Lord, when he cometh, without spot, and blameless!

SERMON IV.

MATTHEW, xvi. 28.

Verily, I say unto you, there be some standing here which shall not taste of death till they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.

THESE remarkable words stand in the conclusion of a certain discourse, with the subject of which, as they have been generally understood, they seem to be but little connected. It must therefore be my business to establish what I take to be their true meaning, before I attempt to enlarge upon the momentous doctrine which I conceive to be contained in them.

The marks of horror and aversion with which our Lord's disciples received the first intimations of his sufferings, gave occasion to a seasonable lecture upon the necessity of

self-denial, as the means appointed by Providence for the attainment of future happiness and glory. "If any one," says our Lord, "would come after me," — if any one pretends to be my disciple, "let him take up his cross and follow me." To enforce this precept, as prescribing a conduct which, afflictive as it may seem for the present, is yet no other than it is every man's truest interest to pursue, he reminds his hearers of the infinite disproportion between time and eternity; he assures them of the certainty of a day of retribution; and to that assurance he subjoins the declaration of the text, as a weighty truth, in which they were deeply interested, — for so much the earnestness with which it seems to have been delivered speaks. "Verily, I say unto you," — these are words bespeaking a most serious attention, — "Verily, I say unto you, there be some standing here which shall not taste of death till they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom."

Here, then, is an assertion concerning some persons who were present at this discourse of our Lord's, that they "should

not taste of death" before a *certain time;* which time is described as that when "the Son of Man should be seen coming in his kingdom.". Observe, it is not simply the time when the Son of Man should come, but the time when he should come *in his kingdom*, and when he should be *seen* so coming. In order to ascertain the meaning of this assertion, the first point must be, to determine, if possible, what may be the particular time which is thus described. From the resolution of this question, it will probably appear in what sense, figurative or literal, it might be affirmed of any who were present at this discourse, that they should not taste of death *before* that time; also, who they might be at whom the words "some standing here," may be supposed to have been pointed. And when we shall have discovered who they were of whom our Lord spake, and what it was he spake concerning them, it is likely we shall then discern for what purpose of general edification the particular destiny of those persons was thus publicly declared.

Many expositors, both ancient and mo-

dern, by "the coming of the Son of Man," in this text, have understood the transfiguration. This notion probably takes its rise from the manner in which St. Peter mentions that memorable transaction, in the first chapter of his second catholic epistle; where, speaking of himself as present upon that occasion in the holy mountain, he says that he was then an eye-witness of the Majesty of our Lord Jesus Christ. Hence, perhaps, the hint was taken, that the transfiguration might be considered as the first manifestation of our Lord in glory to the sons of men; and that the apostles, who were permitted to be present, might be said to have seen the Son of Man at that time coming in his kingdom. And it must be confessed, that no violence is done to the phrase of "the coming of the Son of Man," considered by itself, in this interpretation. But, if it be admitted, — if the time described as that when the Son of Man should be seen coming in his kingdom be understood to have been the time of the transfiguration, — what will be the amount of the solemn asseveration in the text? — Nothing more than this, — that in the numerous assembly

to which our Lord was speaking, composed perhaps of persons of all ages, there were some, — the expressions certainly intimate no great number, — but some few of this great multitude there were who were not to die within a week; for so much was the utmost interval of time between this discourse and the transfiguration. Our great Lord and Master was not accustomed to amuse his followers with any such nugatory predictions.

The like argument sets aside another interpretation, in which our Lord's ascension and the mission of the Holy Ghost are considered as the "coming in his kingdom" intended in the text. Of what importance was it to tell a numerous assembly, (for it was not to the disciples in particular, but to the whole multitude, as we learn from St. Mark, that this discourse was addressed,) — to what purpose, I say, could it be, to tell them that there were some among them who were destined to live half a year?

Both these interpretations have given way to a third, in which "the coming of

our Lord in his kingdom" is supposed to denote the epoch of the destruction of Jerusalem. This exposition is perhaps not so well warranted as hath been generally imagined, by the usual import of the phrase of "the coming of the Son of Man," in other passages of holy writ. There is no question but that "the coming of our Lord," taken literally, signifies his coming in person to the general judgment; and, if the time permitted me to enter upon a minute examination of the several texts wherein the phrase occurs, it might perhaps appear, that, except in the book of Revelations, the figurative sense is exceedingly rare in the Scriptures of the New Testament, if not altogether unexampled. Be that as it may, there is no question but that the coming of our Lord, taken literally, signifies his coming in person to the general judgment; and the close connexion of the words of the text with what immediately precedes, in our Lord's discourse, makes it unreasonable, in my judgment, to look for any thing here but the literal meaning. In the verse next before the text, our Lord speaks of the coming of the Son of Man in terms that

necessarily limit the notion of his coming to that of his last coming to the general judgment. "For the Son of Man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works." And then he adds — "Verily, I say unto you, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death till they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom." First, it is said the Son of Man shall *come*; — it is immediately added, that some then present should *see* him coming. To what purpose is this second declaration, but as a repetition of the first, with the addition of a circumstance which might interest the audience in the event, and awaken their serious attention to it? "I will come; and some of you shall see me coming." Can it be supposed, that in such an asseveration, the word "to come" may bear two different senses; and that the coming, of which it was said that it should be seen, should not be visible? But *what* then did our Lord actually aver? — that any of those who upon this occasion were his hearers should live to the day of the general judgment? —

It cannot be supposed: *That* were to ascribe to him a prediction which the event of things hath falsified. Mark his words: "There be some standing here who shall not *taste* of death." He says not "who shall not *die*," but "who shall not *taste* of death." Not to *taste* of death, is not to *feel* the *pains* of it — not to taste its *bitterness*. In this sense was the same expression used by our Lord upon other occasions, as was indeed the more simple expression of not dying. "If a man keep my saying, he shall never *taste of death*." The expression is to be understood with reference to the intermediate state between death and the final judgment, in which the souls both of the righteous and the wicked exist in a conscious state, — the one comforted with the hope and prospect of their future glory, the other mortified with the expectation of torment. The promise to the saints, that they shall never taste of death, is without limitation of time; — in the next, a time being set, until which the persons intended shall not taste of death, it is implied that *then* they *shall* taste it. The departure of the wicked into everlasting torment is in Scrip-

ture called the second death. This is the death from which Christ came to save penitent sinners; and to this the impenitent remain obnoxious. The pangs and horrors of it will be such, that the evil of natural death, in comparison, may well be overlooked; and it may be said of the wicked, that they shall have no real taste of death till they taste it in the burning lake, whence the smoke of their torment shall ascend for ever and ever. This is what our Lord insinuates in the alarming menace of the text: This, at least, is the most literal exposition that the words will bear; and it connects them more than any other with the scope and occasion of the whole discourse. "Whosoever," says our Lord, "will lose his life shall find it," — shall find, instead of the life he loses here, a better in the world to come; "and whosoever will save his life shall lose it," — shall lose *that* life which alone is worth his care: "For what is a man profited, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" For there will come a day of judgment and retribution: The Son of Man, he who

now converses with you in a human form, " shall come in the glory of the Father, with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works:" on them who, by patient continuance in well-doing, have sought for life and immortality, —on them he shall bestow glory and happiness, honour and praise; but " shame and rebuke, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil." The purport of the discourse was to enforce a just contempt both of the enjoyments and of the sufferings of the present life, from the consideration of the *better* enjoyments and of the *heavier* sufferings of the life to come: and because the discourse was occasioned by a fear which the disciples had betrayed of the sufferings of this world, for which another fear might seem the best antagonist, —for this reason, the point chiefly insisted on is the magnitude of the loss to them who should lose their souls. To give this consideration its full effect, the hearers are told that there were those among themselves who stood in this dangerous predicament. " There be some standing here who shall not taste of death till they see the Son of

Man coming in his kingdom;" and then will they be doomed to endless sufferings, in comparison with which the previous pangs of natural death are nothing. "Flatter not yourselves that these threatenings will never be executed, — that none will be so incorrigibly bad as to incur the extremity of these punishments: verily, I say unto you, there are present, in this very assembly, — there are persons standing here, who will be criminal in that degree, that they will inevitably feel the severity of vindictive justice, — persons who now perhaps hear these warnings with incredulity and contempt: but the time will come, when they will see the Son of Man, whom they despised — whom they rejected — whom they persecuted, coming to execute vengeance on them who have not known God, nor obeyed the gospel; and then will they be doomed to endless sufferings, in comparison with which the previous pangs of natural death are nothing.

It will be proper, however, to consider, whether, among the hearers of this discourse, there might be any at whom it may

be probable that our Lord should point so express a denunciation of final destruction.

"*There are some standing here.*" — The original words, according to the reading which our English translators seem to have followed, might be more exactly rendered— "There are certain persons standing here;" where the expression "certain persons" hath just the same definite sense as "a certain person," the force of the plural number being only that it is a more reserved, and, for that reason, a more alarming way of pointing at an individual. Now, in the assembly to which our Lord was speaking, *a certain person*, it may well be supposed, was present, whom charity herself may hardly scruple to include among the miserable objects of God's final vengeance. The son of perdition, Judas the traitor, was standing there. Our Saviour's first prediction of his passion was that which gave occasion to this whole discourse. It may reasonably be supposed, that the tragical conclusion of his life on earth was present to his mind, with all its horrid circumstances; and, among these, none was likely

to make a more painful impression than the treason of his base disciple. His mind possessed with these objects, when the scene of the general judgment comes in view—the traitor standing in his sight—his crime foreseen—the sordid motives of it understood,—the forethought of the fallen apostle's punishment could not but present itself; and this drew from our divine instructor that alarming menace, which must have struck a chill of horror to the heart of every one that heard it, and the more because the particular application of it was not at the time understood. This was the effect intended: our Lord meant to impress his audience with a just and affecting sense of the magnitude of those evils—the sharpness of those pains, which none but the ungodly shall ever feel, and from which none of the ungodly ever shall escape.

Nor in this passage only, but in every page of holy writ, are these terrors displayed, in expressions studiously adapted to lay hold of the imagination of mankind, and awaken the most thoughtless to such an habitual sense of danger as might be

sufficient to overcome the most powerful allurements of vice. " The wicked are to go into outer darkness. There is to be weeping and gnashing of teeth. They are to depart into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels, where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. There they shall drink of the wrath of God, poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation." Whatever there may be of figure in some of these expressions, as much as this they certainly import, that the future state of the wicked will be a state of exquisite torment both of body and mind, — of torments, not only intense in degree, but incapable of intermission, cure, or end, — a condition of unmixed and perfect evil, not less deprived of future hope than of present enjoyment.

It is amazing that a danger so strongly set forth should be disregarded; and this is the more amazing, when we take a view of the particular casts and complexions of character among which this disregard is chiefly found. They may be reduced to three different classes, according to the

three different passions by which they are severally overcome, — ambition, avarice, and sensuality. Personal consequence is the object of the first class, wealth of the second, pleasure of the third. Personal consequence is not to be acquired but by great undertakings, bold in the first conception, difficult in execution, extensive in consequence. Such undertakings demand great abilities. Accordingly, we commonly find in the ambitious man a superiority of parts, in some measure proportioned to the magnitude of his designs: it is his particular talent to weigh distant consequences, to provide against them, and to turn every thing, by a deep policy and forecast, to his own advantage. It might be expected, that this sagacity of understanding would restrain him from the desperate folly of sacrificing an unfading crown for that glory that must shortly pass away. Again, your avaricious money-getting man is generally a character of wonderful discretion. It might be expected that he would be exact to count his gains, and would be the last to barter possessions which he might hold for ever, for a wealth

that shall be taken from him, and shall not profit him in the day of wrath. Then, for those servants of sin the effeminate sons of sensual pleasure, these are a feeble timid race. It might be expected that these, of all men, would want firmness to brave the danger. Yet so it is, — the ambitious pursues a conduct which must end in shame; the miser, to be rich now, makes himself poor for ever; and the tender delicate voluptuary shrinks not at the thought of endless burnings!

These things could not be, but for one of these two reasons, — either that there is some lurking incredulity in men, *an evil heart of unbelief*, that admits not the gospel doctrine of punishment in its full extent; or that their imaginations set the danger at a prodigious distance.

The Scriptures are not more explicit in the threatenings of wrath upon the impenitent than in general assertions of God's forbearance and mercy. These assertions are confirmed by the voice of Nature, which loudly proclaims the goodness as

well as the power of the universal Lord. Man is frail and imperfect in his original constitution. This, too, is the doctrine of the Scriptures; and every man's experience unhappily confirms it. Human life, by the appointment of Providence, is short: "He hath made our days as it were a span long." "Is it, then, to be supposed, that this good, this merciful, this long-suffering God, should doom his frail imperfect creature man to endless punishment, for the follies — call them, if you please, the crimes, of a short life? Is *He* injured by *our* crimes, that he should seek this vast revenge? or does his nature delight in groans and lamentations? — It cannot be supposed. What revelation declares of the future condition of the wicked is prophecy; and prophecy, we know, deals in poetical and exaggerated expressions." Such, perhaps, is the language which the sinner holds within himself, when he is warned of the wrath to come; and such language he is taught to hold, in the writings and the sermons of our modern sectaries. He is taught, that the punishment threatened is far more heavy than

will be executed: he is told, that the words which, in their literal meaning, denote endless duration, are, upon many occasions, in Scripture, as in common speech, used figuratively or abusively, to denote very long but yet definite periods of time. These notions are inculcated in the writings, not of infidels, but of men who, with all their errors, must be numbered among the friends and advocates of virtue and religion: but, while we willingly bear witness to their worth, we must not the less strenuously resist their dangerous innovations.

The question concerning the eternity of punishment (like some others, which, considered merely as questions of philosophy, may be of long and difficult discussion,) might be brought to a speedy determination, if men, before they heat themselves with argument, would impartially consider how far reason in her natural strength may be competent to the inquiry. I do not mean to affirm generally that reason is not a judge in matters of religion; but I do maintain, that there are certain points concerning the nature of the Deity, and the

schemes of Providence, upon which reason is dumb and revelation is explicit; and that, in these points, there is no certain guide but the plain obvious meaning of the written word. The question concerning the eternal duration of the torments of the wicked is one of these.

From any natural knowledge that we have of the Divine character, it never can be proved that the scheme of eternal punishment is unworthy of him. It cannot be proved that this scheme is inconsistent with his natural perfections — his essential goodness. What is essential goodness? — It is usually defined by a single property, — the love of virtue for its own sake. The definition is good, as far as it goes; but is it complete? does it comprehend the whole of the thing intended? — Perhaps not. Virtue and vice are opposites; love and hate are opposites: a consistent character must bear opposite affections towards opposite things: to love virtue, therefore, for its own sake, and to hate vice for its own sake, may equally belong to the character of essential goodness; and thus, as virtue,

in itself, and for its own sake, *must* be the object of God's love and favour, so, incurable vice, in itself, and for its own sake, *may* be the object of his hatred and persecution.

Again, it cannot be proved that the scheme of eternal punishment is inconsistent with the relative perfections of the Deity — with those attributes which are displayed in his dealings with the rational part of his creation: for who is he that shall determine in what proportions the attributes of justice and mercy, forbearance and severity, ought to be mixed up in the character of the Supreme Governor of the universe? Nor can it be proved that eternal punishment is inconsistent with the schemes of God's moral government: for who can define the extent of that government? who among the sons of men hath an exact understanding of its ends — a knowledge of its various parts, and of their mutual relations and dependencies? Who is he that shall explain by what motives the righteous are to be preserved from falling from their future state of glory? That they shall *not fall*, we have the comfortable

assurance of God's word; but by what means is the security of their state to be effected? — Unquestionably by the influence of moral motives upon the minds of free and rational agents. But who is so enlightened as to foresee what particular motives may be the fittest for the purpose? Who can say — These might be sufficient; — these are superfluous? Is it *impossible*, that, among other motives, the sufferings of the wicked may have a salutary effect? And shall God spare the wicked, if the preservation of the righteous should call for the perpetual example of their punishment? —— Since, then, no proof can be deduced, from any natural knowledge that we have of God, that the scheme of eternal punishment is unworthy of the Divine character, — since there is no proof that it is inconsistent either with the natural perfections of God or with his relative attributes, — since it may be necessary to the ends of his government, — upon what grounds do we proceed, when we pretend to interpret, to qualify, and to extenuate the threatenings of holy writ?

The original frailty of human nature and the providential shortness of human life, are alleged to no purpose in this argument. Eternal punishment is not denounced against the frail, but against the hardened and perverse; and life is to be esteemed long or short, not from any proportion it may bear to eternity, (which would be equally none at all, though it were protracted to ten thousand times its ordinary length,) but according as the space of it may be more or less than may be just sufficient for the purposes of such a state as our present life is of discipline and probation. There must be a certain length of time, the precise measure of which can be known to none but God, within which, the promises and the threatenings of the gospel, joined with the experience which every man's life affords of God's power and providence—of the instability and vanity of all worldly enjoyments,—there must, in the nature of things, be a certain measure of time, within which, if at all, this state of experience, joined with future hopes and fears, must produce certain degrees of improvement in moral wisdom and in virtuous

habit. If, in all that time, no effect is wrought, the impediment can only have arisen from incurable self-will and obstinacy. If the ordinary period of life be more than is precisely sufficient for this trial and cultivation of the character, those characters which shall show themselves incorrigibly bad will have no claim upon the justice or the goodness of God, to abridge the time of their existence in misery, so that it may bear some certain proportion to the short period of their wicked lives. Qualities are not to be measured by duration: They bear no more relation to it than they do to space. The hatefulness of sin is seated in itself—in its own internal quality of evil: by *that* its ill-deservings are to be measured,—not by the narrowness of the limits, either of time or place, within which the good providence of God hath confined its power of doing mischief.

If, on any ground, it were safe to indulge a hope that the suffering of the wicked may have an end, it would be upon the principle adopted by the great Origen, and by other eminent examples of learning and

piety which our own times have seen,— that the actual endurance of punishment in the next life will produce effects to which the apprehension of it in this had been insufficient; and end, after a long course of ages, in the reformation of the worst characters. But the principle that this effect is possible — that the heart may be reclaimed by force, is at best precarious; and the only safe principle of human conduct is the belief that unrepented sin will suffer endless punishment hereafter.

Perhaps, the distance at which imagination sets the prospect of future punishment may have a more general influence in diminishing the effect of God's merciful warnings than any sceptical doubts about the intensity or the duration of the sufferings of the wicked. The Spirit of God means to awaken us from this delusion, when he tells us, by the apostles and holy men of old, that "the coming of the Lord draweth nigh." He means, by these declarations, to remind every man that his particular doom is near: for, whatever may be the season appointed in the secret

counsels of God for " that great and terrible day, when the heavens and the earth shall flee from the face of him who shall be seated on the throne, and their place shall be no more found,"—whatever may be the destined time of this public catastrophe, the end of the world, with respect to every individual, takes place at the conclusion of his own life. In the grave there will be no repentance; no virtues can be acquired—no evil habits thrown off: with that character, whether of virtue or of vice, with which a man leaves the world, with that he must appear before the judgment-seat of Christ: in that moment, therefore, in which his present life ends, every man's future condition becomes irreversibly determined. In this sense, to every one that standeth here, " the coming of the Lord draweth nigh,—the Judge is at the door. Let us watch, therefore, and pray,"—watch over ourselves, and pray for the succours of God's grace, that we may be able to stand before the Son of Man. Nor shall vigilance and prayer be ineffectual. On the incorrigible and perverse,—on those who mock at God's threatenings, and reject his

promises,—on these only the severity of wrath will fall. But, for those who lay these warnings seriously to heart—who dread the pollutions of the world, and flee from sin as from a serpent—who fear God's displeasure more than death, and seek his favour more than life,—though much of frailty will to the last adhere to them, yet these are the objects of the Father's mercy —of the Redeemer's love. For these he died,—for these he pleads; these he supports and strengthens with his Spirit; these he shall lead with him triumphant to the mansions of glory, when Sin and Death shall be cast into the lake of fire.

SERMON V.

PSALM xlv. 1.

I speak of the things which I have made touching the King, or, *unto the King*.

THIS forty-fifth psalm has for many ages made a stated part of the public service of the church on this anniversary festival of our blessed Lord's nativity*. With God's assistance, I purpose to explain to you its application, both in the general subject and in each particular part, to this great occasion; which will afford both seasonable and edifying matter of discourse.

It is a poetical composition, in the form of an epithalamium or song of congratulation, upon the marriage of a great king, to be sung to music at the wedding-feast. The

* Preached on Christmas-day.

topics are such as were the usual groundwork of such gratulatory odes with the poets of antiquity: they all fall under two general heads—the praises of the bridegroom, and the praises of the bride. The bridegroom is praised for the comeliness of his person and the urbanity of his address—for his military exploits—for the extent of his conquests—for the upright administration of his government—for the magnificence of his court. The bride is celebrated for her high birth—for the beauty of her person, the richness of her dress, and her numerous train of blooming bridemaids. It is foretold that the marriage will be fruitful, and that the sons of the great king will be sovereigns of the whole earth. In this general structure of the poem, we find nothing but the common topics and the common arrangement of every wedding-song: and were it not that it is come down to us in the authentic collection of the sacred hymns of the Hebrew church, and that some particular expressions are found in it, which, with all the allowance that can be made for the hyperbolisms of the oriental style, (of which, of late years, we have been

accustomed to hear more than is true, as applied to the sacred writers,) are not easily applicable to the parties, even in a royal marriage,—were it not for such expressions which occur, and for the notorious circumstance that it had a distinguished place in the canon of the Hebrew Scriptures, we should not be led to divine, from any thing in the general structure of the poem, that this psalm had reference to any religious subject. But when we connect these circumstances with another, which cannot have escaped the observation of any reader of the Bible, that the relation between the Saviour and his church is represented in the writings both of the Old and New Testament under the image of the relation of a husband to his wife,—that it is a favourite image with all the ancient prophets, when they would set forth the loving kindness of God for the church, or the church's dutiful return of love to him; while, on the contrary, the idolatry of the church, in her apostacies, is represented as the adultery of a married woman,—that this image has been consecrated to this signification by our Lord's own use of it, who describes

God in the act of settling the church in her final state of peace and perfection, as a king making a marriage for his son;—the conjecture that will naturally arise upon the recollection of these circumstances will be, that this epithalamium, preserved among the sacred writings of the ancient Jewish church, celebrates no common marriage, but the great mystical wedding,—that Christ is the bridegroom, and the spouse his church. And this was the unanimous opinion of all antiquity, without exception even of the Jewish expositors: for although, with the veil of ignorance and prejudice upon their understandings and their hearts, they discern not the completion of this or of any of their prophesies in the Son of Mary, yet they all allow, that this is one of the prophesies which relate to the Messiah and Messiah's people; and none of them ever dreamed of an application of it to the marriage of any earthly prince.

It is the more extraordinary, that there should have arisen in the Christian church, in later ages, expositors of great name and

authority, and indeed of great learning, who have maintained that the immediate subject of the psalm is the marriage of Solomon with Pharaoh's daughter; and can discover only a distant reference to Christ and the church, as typified by the Jewish king and his Egyptian bride. This exposition, too absurd and gross for Jewish blindness, contrary to the unanimous sense of the fathers of the earliest ages, unfortunately gained credit, in a late age, in the reformed churches, upon the authority of Calvin; insomuch, that in an English translation of the Bible, which goes under the name of Queen Elizabeth's Bible, because it was in common use in private families in her reign, we have this argument prefixed to the psalm: "The majestie of Solomon, his honour, strength, beauty, riches, and power, are praised; and also his marriage with the Egyptian, being an heathen woman, is blessed." It is added indeed, "Under this figure, the wonderfull majestie and increase of the kingdom of Christ, and his church now taken of the Gentiles, is described."—Now the account of this matter is this. This English trans-

lation of the Bible, which is, indeed, upon the whole, a very good one, and furnished with very edifying notes and illustrations (except that in many points they savour too much of Calvinism), was made and first published at Geneva, by the English Protestants who fled thither from Mary's persecution. During their residence there, they contracted a veneration for the character of Calvin,—which was no more than was due to his great piety and his great learning; but they unfortunately contracted also a veneration for his opinions, —a veneration more than was due to the opinions of any uninspired teacher. The bad effects of this unreasonable partiality the church of England feels, in some points, to the present day; and this false notion, which they who were led away with it circulated among the people of this country, of the true subject of this psalm, in the argument which they presumed to prefix to it, is one instance of this calamitous consequence.

Calvin was undoubtedly a good man, and a great divine; but, with all his great talents

and his great learning, he was, by his want of taste, and by the poverty of his imagination, a most wretched expositor of the prophesies,—just as he would have been a wretched expositor of any secular poet. He had no sense of the beauties and no understanding of the imagery of poetry ;—and the far greater part of the prophetical writings, and all the psalms without exception, are poetical. And there is no stronger instance of his inability in this branch of sacred criticism than his notion of this psalm. "It is certain," he has the arrogance to say, with all antiquity, Jewish and Christian, in opposition to him, "it is certain, that this psalm was composed concerning Solomon. Yet the subject is not dalliance; but, under the figure of Solomon, the holy conjunction of Christ with his church is propounded to us."

It is most certain, that, in the prophetical book of the Song of Solomon, the union of Christ and his church is described in images taken entirely from the mutual passion and early loves of Solomon and his Egyptian bride. And this perhaps might be the

ground of Calvin's error: He might imagine, that this psalm was another shorter poem upon the same subject, and of the same cast. But no two compositions can be more unlike than the Song of Solomon and this forty-fifth psalm. Read the Song of Solomon, you will find the Hebrew king, if you know any thing of his history, produced indeed as the emblem of a greater personage, but you will find *him* in every page. Read the forty-fifth psalm, and tell me if you can anywhere find King Solomon? We find, indeed, passages which may be applicable to Solomon, but not more applicable to him than to many other earthly kings, — such as comeliness of person and urbanity of address, mentioned in the second verse. These might be qualities, for any thing that we know to the contrary, belonging to Solomon; — I say, for any thing that we know to the contrary; for in these particulars the sacred history gives no information: We read of Solomon's learning, and of his wisdom, and of the admirable sagacity and integrity of his judicial decisions; but we read not at all, as far as I recollect, of the extraordinary comeliness of his person, or the

affability of his speech: And if he possessed these qualities, they are no more than other monarchs have possessed in a degree not to be surpassed by Solomon. Splendour and stateliness of dress, twice mentioned in this psalm, were not peculiar to Solomon, but belong to every great and opulent monarch. Other circumstances might be mentioned, applicable indeed to Solomon, but no otherwise than as generally applicable to every king. But the circumstances which are characteristic of the king who is the hero of this poem are every one of them utterly inapplicable to Solomon; insomuch that not one of them can be ascribed to him, without contradicting the history of his reign. The hero of this poem is a warrior, who girds his sword upon his thigh, rides in pursuit of flying foes, makes havoc among them with his sharp arrows, and reigns at last by conquest over his vanquished enemies. Now Solomon was no warrior; he enjoyed a long reign of forty years of uninterrupted peace. He retained, indeed, the sovereignty of the countries which his father had conquered; but he made no *new* conquests of his own. "He had dominion over all the

region west of the Euphrates; over all the kings on this side of the river (they were his vassals); and he had peace on all sides round about him. And Judah and Israel dwelt safely, every man under his vine and under his fig-tree, from Dan even to Beer-sheba, all the days of Solomon." If Solomon ever girded a sword upon his thigh, it must have been merely for state; if he had a quiver of sharp arrows, he could have had no use for them but in hunting. We read, indeed, that Jehovah, offended at the idolatries of Solomon in his old age, stirred up an adversary unto Solomon in Hadad the Edomite, and another in Rezon the Syrian, and a third in Jeroboam the son of Nebat. But though Hadad and Rezon bore Solomon and his people a grudge, there is no reason to suppose that the enmity of either broke out into acts of open hostility, during Solomon's life at least, — certainly into none of such importance as to engage the old monarch in a war with either. The contrary is evident from two circumstances. The first, that the return of Hadad into his country from Egypt was early in the reign of Solomon; for he returned as soon as he

heard that David and Joab were both dead. And if this Edomite had provoked a war in so early a period of Solomon's reign, the sacred history could not have spoken in the terms in which it speaks of the uninterrupted peace which Israel enjoyed all the days of Solomon. The second circumstance is this. In that portion of the history which mentions these adversaries, it is said of the third adversary, Jeroboam, "that he lifted up his hand against the king;" and yet it is certain, that Jeroboam never lifted up his hand till Solomon himself was in his grave. Solomon was jealous of Jeroboam, as the person marked by the prophet Ahijah as the future king of one branch of the divided kingdom, "and sought to kill him." Jeroboam thereupon fled into Egypt, and remained there till the death of Solomon. And this makes it probable of the two foreign adversaries, that whatever hatred might be rankling in their hearts, they awaited for Solomon's death, before they proceeded to open hostilities. But, however that might be, it is most certain that the character of a warrior and a conqueror

never less belonged to any monarch than to Solomon.

Another circumstance of distinction in the great personage celebrated in this psalm is his love of righteousness and hatred of wickedness. The original expresses that he had set his heart upon righteousness, and bore an antipathy to wickedness. His love of righteousness and hatred of wickedness had been so much the ruling principles of his whole conduct, that for this he was advanced to a condition of the highest bliss, and endless perpetuity was promised to his kingdom. The word we render "righteousness" in its strict and proper meaning signifies "justice," or the constant and perpetual observance of the natural distinctions of right and wrong in civil society; and principally with respect to property in private persons, and, in a magistrate or sovereign, in the impartial exercise of judicial authority. But the word we render "wickedness" denotes not only "injustice," but whatever is contrary to moral purity in the indulgence of the appetites of the individual, and whatever is contrary to a

principle of true piety towards God. Now the word "righteousness" being here opposed to this wickedness, must certainly be taken as generally as the word to which it is opposed in a contrary signification. It must signify, therefore, not merely "justice," in the sense we have explained, but purity of private manners, and piety towards God. Now Solomon was certainly upon the whole a good king, nor was he without piety; but his love of righteousness, in the large sense in which we have shown the word is to be taken, and his antipathy to the contrary, fell very far short of what the psalmist ascribes to his great king, and procured for him no such stability of his monarchy. Solomon, whatever might be the general worth and virtue of his character, had no such predominant attachment to righteousness nor antipathy to wickedness, in the large sense in which the words are taken by the psalmist, but that his love for the one and his hatred of the other were overpowered by his doating fondness for many of his seven hundred wives, who had so much influence with him in his later years, that they turned away his heart

to other gods, and prevailed upon the aged king to erect temples to their idols.

Another circumstance wholly inapplicable to Solomon is the numerous progeny of sons, the issue of the marriage, all of whom were to be made princes over all the earth. Solomon had but one son, that we read of, that ever came to be a king — his son and successor Rehoboam; and so far was he from being a prince over all the earth, that he was no sooner seated on the throne than he lost the greater part of his father's kingdom.

Upon the whole, therefore, it appears, that in the character which the psalmist draws of the king whose marriage is the occasion and the subject of this song, some things are so general as in a certain sense to be applicable to any great king, of fable or of history, of ancient or of modern times: And these things are indeed applicable to Solomon, because he was a great king; but for no other reason: They are no otherwise applicable to him than to King Priam or Agamemnon, to King Tarquin or King

Herod, to a king of Persia or a king of Egypt, a king of Jewry or a king of England. But those circumstances of the description which are properly characteristic are evidently appropriate to some particular king, — not common to any and to all. Every one of these circumstances, in the psalmist's description of his king, positively exclude King Solomon; being manifestly contradictory to the history of his reign, inconsistent with the tenor of his private life, and not verified in the fortunes of his family. There are, again, other circumstances, which clearly exclude every *earthly* king,— such as the salutation of the king by the title of God, in a manner in which that title never is applied to any created being; and the promise of the endless perpetuity of his kingdom. At the same time, every particular of the description, interpreted according to the usual and established significance of the figured style of prophecy, is applicable to and expressive of some circumstance in the mystical union betwixt Christ and his church. A greater, therefore, than Solomon is here; and this I shall show more particularly in the sequel. It is certain, there-

fore, that this mystical wedding is the sole subject of this psalm, without any reference to the marriage of Solomon, or any other earthly monarch, as a type. And it was with great good judgment, that upon the revision of our English Bible, in the reign of James the First, the Calvinistic argument of this psalm, as it stood in Queen Elizabeth's Bible, was expunged, and that other substituted which we now read in our Bible of the larger size, in these words: "The majesty and grace of Christ's kingdom; the duty of the church, and the benefits thereof;" — which indeed contain a most exact summary of the whole doctrine of the psalm. And the particulars of this it is my intention in future discourses to expound.

SERMON VI.

PSALM, xlv. 1.

I speak of the things which I have made touching the King, or, *unto the King*.

IN my last discourse in this place, I undertook to show, that the subject of this psalm (which, in its composition, is evidently in the form of an epithalamium or a marriage-song,) is the connexion between Christ and his church, represented here, as in other parts of Scripture, under the emblem of a marriage. I undertook to show, that this is the immediate and single subject of the psalm, in the first intention of the author, without any reference to the marriage of Solomon or any earthly monarch as a type. But as this, which was

the unanimous opinion of all antiquity, has been brought into some degree of doubt, by the credit which a contrary opinion obtained among Protestants at the beginning of the Reformation, upon the authority of so great a man as Calvin, I thought proper to argue the matter in some detail; and to show, by the particulars of the character of the psalmist's king, that Solomon more especially, but in truth every earthly monarch, is excluded. I might otherwise have drawn my conclusion at once, from that portion of the first verse which I chose for my text: "I speak of the things which I have made touching the King," or "unto the King;" or, as the original might be still more exactly rendered, "I address my performance to the King." It is a remark, and a very just remark, of the Jewish expositors, — and it carries the more weight because it comes from Jews, who, by their prejudices against the Christian name, might have thought themselves interested to keep out of sight a principle so serviceable to the Christian scheme of interpretation, — but it is their remark, and their principle, that the appellation of "the King," in the book of

Psalms, is an appropriate title of the Messiah; insomuch, that wherever it occurs, except the context directs it to some special meaning, you are to think of no earthly king, but of the King Messiah. By the admission, therefore, of these Jewish commentators, the Messiah is the immediate subject of this psalm.

My anxiety to settle the question of the immediate subject of this psalm was for the sake of the greater evidence and perspicuity of the exposition of the whole, verse by verse, which I am now about to deliver: For without a right comprehension of the general subject, it will be impossible that the parts should be understood; and yet this psalm is perhaps one of the most important to be well understood, in all its parts, of any in the whole collection. Farther to settle this point of the general subject of the psalm, I must observe, and desire you to bear it in remembrance, that in the prophecies of the old Testament which set forth the union between the Redeemer and his church, under the figure of the state of wedlock, we read of two celebrations of that mystical wedding,

at very different and distant seasons; or, to be more distinct and particular, we read of a marriage — a separation, on account of the woman's incontinence, *i. e.* on account of her idolatry — and, in the end, of a re-marriage with the woman reclaimed and pardoned. The original marriage was contracted with the Hebrew church, by the institution of the Mosaic covenant, at the time of the Exodus; as we are taught expressly by the prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel. The separation was the dispersion of the Jewish nation by the Romans, when they were reduced to that miserable state in which to this day they remain, — their city laid in ruins, their temple demolished and burnt, and the forms of the Mosaic worship abolished. Then it was that the sceptre of ecclesiastical sway (for that is the sceptre meant in Jacob's famous prophecy) departed from Judah. The Jews were no longer the depositaries of the laws and oracles of God; they were no longer to take the lead in matters of religion and worship; and the government even of the Christian church of Jerusalem remained but for a very short time after this in the hands of a bishop of the circumcision: So strictly was

the prophecy fulfilled of the departure of the ecclesiastical sceptre from Judah, the only remnant then visibly extant in the world of the Jewish nation. It is the same event which is predicted in many other prophecies as the expulsion of the incontinent wife from the husband's house. Her expulsion, however, was to be but temporary, though of long duration: It was a separation, as we should say in modern language, from bed and board, not an absolute divorce, such as, by the principles of the Mosaic law, (which in this point, however, was not perfectly consistent with the original divine law of marriage,) set the woman at liberty to unite herself to another man, and, in that event, prohibited her return to her first husband. On the contrary, the same prophecies that threatened the expulsion maintain the continuance of the husband's property in the separated woman, and promise a reconciliation and final reinstatement of her in her husband's favour. "Where is this bill of your mother's divorcement?" saith the prophet Isaiah. The question implies a denial that any such instrument existed. And in a subsequent

part of his prophecies, he expressly announces the reconciliation. "Blush not," saith the Redeemer to the pardoned wife; "for thou shalt not be brought to reproach; for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth, and the reproach of thy deserted state thou shalt no more remember. For thy Maker is thy husband; Jehovah of Hosts is his name; and he who claims thee is the Holy One of Israel. As a woman forsaken and deeply afflicted, Jehovah hath recalled thee; and as a wife wedded in youth, but afterwards rejected, saith thy God. For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I receive thee again." The reconciliation is to be made publicly, by a repetition of the nuptial ceremonies. So we learn from the latter part of the Apocalypse. After Christ's final victory over the apostate faction, proclamation is made, by a voice issuing from the throne,—"The marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready," *i. e.* hath prepared herself, by penitence and reformation, to be reunited to him. And one of the seven angels calls to St. John—"Come hither, and I will show thee the

Lamb's wife." Then he shows him "the holy Jerusalem," *i. e.* the church of the converted Jews. These nuptials therefore of the Lamb are not, as some have imagined, a marriage with a second wife, a Gentile church, taken into the place of the Jewish, irrevocably discarded: No such idea of an absolute divorce is to be found in prophecy. But it is a public reconciliation with the original wife, the Hebrew church, become the mother church of Christendom, notified by the ceremony of a remarriage; for to no other than the reconciled Hebrew church belongs in prophecy the august character of the Queen Consort. The season of this renewed marriage is the second advent, when the new covenant will be established with the natural Israel; and it is this remarriage which is the proper subject of this psalm.

And this again I might have concluded, according to the principles of the Jewish expositors, from my text; which, by the single word "the King," directs the application of this psalm to Christ in his kingly character. Christ, indeed, already exercises

his regal office, in his care and government of his church; but the second advent is the season when his glory and majesty will be openly manifested to the whole world, and the Jews visibly reinstated in his favour. The marriage, therefore, which is the peculiar subject of this psalm, must be that reunion of the Saviour with the Jewish church which is to take place at that season.

Never losing sight of this as his proper subject, the divine poet takes, however, an ample range: For he opens with our Lord's first appearance in the flesh, when, by the promulgation of the gospel, the guests were summoned to the wedding-supper; and running rapidly, but in order, through all the different periods of Christianity, from its first beginning to its consummation in this spiritual wedding, he makes the general outline of its divine history the groundwork of this highly mystic and important song; — to the exposition of which, without farther preface, I shall now proceed.

The psalm takes its beginning in a plain unaffected manner, with a verse briefly

declarative of the importance of the subject, the author's extraordinary knowledge of it, and the manner in which it will be treated.

"My heart is inditing a good matter;" or rather,

"My heart labours with a goodly theme;" for the word "inditing" answers but poorly, as our translators themselves appear from their margin to have been well aware, to the emphasis of the original, which expresses, that the mind of the prophet was excited and heated, boiling over, as it were, with his subject, and eager to give utterance to its great conceptions. "A good matter," or "a goodly theme," denotes a subject of the highest interest and importance.

"My heart labours with a goodly theme.

"I address my performance to the King;" that is, as hath been abundantly explained, to the great King Messiah.

"My tongue is the pen of a ready writer;" that is, of a well-instructed writer,

—a writer prepared and ready, by a perfect knowledge of the subject he undertakes to treat.

But with what sense and meaning is it that the psalmist compares his tongue to the pen of such a writer?—It is to intimate, as I apprehend, that what he is about to deliver is no written composition, but an extemporaneous effusion, without any premeditation of his own, upon the immediate impulse and suggestion of the Holy Spirit: That what will fall, however, in that manner from his tongue, for the coherence and importance of the matter, for the correct propriety of the expression, and for the orderly arrangement of the parts, will in no degree fall short of the most laboured production of the pen of any writer, the best prepared by previous study of his subject; inasmuch as the Spirit of God inspires his thoughts and prompts his utterance.

After this brief preface, declaring that his subject is Messiah, chiefly in his kingly character,—that he cannot contain the

thoughts which are rising in his mind,—that he speaks not from himself, or from previous study, but from inspiration at the moment,—he plunges at once into the subject he had propounded; addressing the King Messiah as if he were actually standing in the royal presence. And in this same strain, indeed, the whole song proceeds; as referring to a scene present to the prophet's eye, or to things which he saw doing.

This scene consists of three principal parts, relating to three grand divisions of the whole interval of time from our Lord's first appearance in the flesh to the final triumph of the church, upon his second advent. And the psalm may be divided into as many sections, in which the events of these periods are described in their proper order.

The first section, consisting only of the second verse, describes our Lord on earth in the days of his humiliation. The five following verses make the second section, and describe the successful propagation of

the gospel, and our Lord's victory over all his enemies. This comprehends the whole period from our Lord's ascension to the time not yet arrived of the fulfilling of the Gentiles. The sequel of the psalm, from the end of the seventh verse, exhibits the remarriage,—that is, the restoration of the converted Jews to the religious prerogative of their nation.

The second verse, describing our Lord in the days of his humiliation, may seem perhaps to relate merely to his person, and the manner of his address.

"Thou art fairer than the children of men;" rather,

"Thou art adorned with beauty beyond the sons of men;

"Grace is poured upon thy lips;

"Therefore God hath blessed thee for ever."

We have no account in the gospels of our Saviour's person. Some writers of an early age (but none so early as to have seen him) speak of it as wanting dignity,

both its branches,—in the beauty of our Saviour's person, no less than in the graciousness of his speech.

External feature, however, is generally the impression of the mind upon the body, and words are but the echo of the thoughts; and, in prophecy, more is usually meant than meets the ear in the first sound and most obvious sense of the terms employed. Beauty and grace of speech are certainly used in this text as figures of much higher qualities, which were conspicuous in our Lord, and in him alone of all the sons of men. That image of God in which Adam was created in our Lord appeared perfect and entire,—in the unspotted innocency of his life, the sanctity of his manners, and his perfect obedience to the law of God;—in the vast powers of his mind, intellectual and moral; intellectual, in his comprehension of all knowledge; moral, in his power of resisting all the allurements of vice, and of encountering all the difficulties of virtue and religion, despising hardship and shame, enduring pain and death. This was the beauty with which he was adorned beyond

the sons of men. In him, the beauty of the Divine image was refulgent in its original perfection; in all the sons of Adam, obscured and marred, in a degree to be scarce discernible,—the will depraved, the imagination debauched, the reason weak, the passions rampant. This deformity is not externally visible, nor the spiritual beauty which is its opposite; but, could the eye be turned upon the internal man, we should see the hideous shape of a will at enmity with God—a heart disregarding his law, insensible of his goodness, fearless of his wrath, swelling with the passions of ambition, avarice, vain-glory, lust. Yet this is the picture of the unregenerated man, by the depravity consequent upon the fall, born in iniquity and conceived in sin. Christ, on the contrary, by the mysterious manner of his conception, was born without spot of sin; he grew up and lived full of grace and truth, perfectly sanctified in flesh and spirit. With this beauty he was "adorned beyond the sons of men."

Again, the gracefulness of his speech is

put figuratively for the perfection, sublimity, excellence, and sweetness, of the doctrine he delivered;—a doctrine, in truth, intrinsically perfect; sublime, as being far above the discovery of human wisdom; excellent, by its salutary effects and operation upon men, raising their minds to the knowledge of the true God, —to a knowledge of his nature, as far as a nature so distinct from matter, so remote from sense, so transcending reason, can be made intelligible to man, united to matter, perceiving by sense what immediately surrounds him, but contemplating only at a distance the objects of pure intellect;—a doctrine sweeter to the regenerate soul than honey and the honey-comb to the palate, by the disclosure of the great scheme of redemption in all its branches —the incarnation of the Son of Man— the atonement for sin by his death—the efficacy of his intercession—the constant supply of succour from the Holy Spirit. This doctrine, cherishing the contrite, consoling the afflicted, banishing despair, raising the fallen, justifying sinners, giving life to the dead,—in a word, the glad

tidings of salvation, — this is the grace which is poured over the lips of the Son of God.

It is to be observed, that the happiness and glory to which the human nature is advanced in the person of Jesus, the man united to the Godhead, and now seated with the Father on his throne, is always represented in holy writ as the reward of that man's obedience. In conformity with this notion, the psalmist says — "Therefore," — for this reason, in reward of the holiness perfected in thy own life, and thy gracious instruction of sinners in the ways of righteousness, "God hath blessed thee for ever," — hath raised thee from the dead, and advanced thee to endless bliss and glory.

Thus the psalmist closes his brief description of our Lord on earth, in the days of his humiliation, with the mention, equally brief, but equally comprehensive, of the exaltation in which it terminated.

He proceeds to the second great period in the divine history of Christianity, the

successful propagation of the gospel, and our Lord's final victory over all his adversaries,—a work gradually accomplished, and occupying the whole interval of time from his ascension, to the epoch, not yet arrived, of the fulness of the Gentiles coming in.

From the commendation of the comeliness of the King's person, and the graciousness of his speech, the psalmist, in the same figurative style, passes to the topic of his prowess as a warrior, under which character our Lord is perpetually described in the prophecies. The enemies he had to engage are the wicked passions of men, the Devil in his wiles and machinations, and the persecuting powers of the world. The warfare is continued through the whole of the period I have mentioned; commencing upon our Lord's ascension, at which time he is represented, in the Revelations, as going forth upon a "white horse, with a crown upon his head and a bow in his hand, conquering and to conquer." The psalmist, in imagery almost the same, accosts him as a warlike prince preparing to take the field,

— describes his weapons, and the magnificence of his armour, and promises him victory and universal dominion.

3. "Gird thy sword upon thy thigh,
"O Most Mighty! with thy glory and
thy majesty."

This verse, I fear, must be but ill understood by the English reader. The words "O Most Mighty!" very weakly render the original, which is a single word, one of the titles of Christ, in its literal sense expressive of might and valour. But the great difficulty which, in my apprehension, must perplex the English reader, lies in the exhortation to gird on glory and majesty together with the sword. The things have no obvious connexion; and how are majesty and glory, in any sense which the words may bear in our language, to be girt on upon the person? — The truth is, that in the Hebrew language these words have a great variety and latitude of meaning; and either these very words, or their synonymes, are used in other places for splendid dress and for robes of state; and being things to be girt on, they must here denote some part

of the warrior's dress. They signify such sort of armour, of costly materials and exquisite workmanship, as was worn by the greatest generals, and by kings when they led their armies in person; and was contrived for ornament as well as safety. The whole verse might be intelligibly and yet faithfully rendered in these words:

"Warrior! gird thy sword upon thy thigh;
"Buckle on thy refulgent dazzling armour."

The psalmist goes on:

4. "Take aim, be prosperous, pursue,
"In the cause of truth, humility, and righteousness;"

that is, take aim with thy bow and arrow at the enemy; be prosperous or successful in the aim taken; ride on in pursuit of the flying foe, in the cause of religious truth, evangelical humility, and righteousness.

"And thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things;"

rather,

"And thy own right hand shall show thee wonderful things."

In these last words, the Saviour, effecting every thing by his own power, is represented under the image of a great champion in the field, who is prompted by his own courage, and a reliance on his own strength and skill, to attempt what might seem impracticable; singly to attack whole squadrons of the enemy, — to cut his way through their embattled troops, — to scale their ramparts and their walls, — and at last achieves what seems a wonder to himself, when the fray is over, when he is at leisure to survey the bulwarks he has demolished, and the many carcasses his single arm has stretched upon the plain. Such great things he will be able to effect; for

5. "Thine arrows," saith the psalmist,
"are very sharp
"In the heart of the King's enemies;
"Insomuch that peoples fall under thee."

To open the true spiritual meaning of all this high-wrought imagery, will be ample matter for another discourse. I shall close, therefore, for the present, with this prelimi-

nary observation, as the fundamental principle of the interpretation which by God's assistance I shall give, that the war in which the Saviour is engaged is very different from the wars which the princes of this world wage upon one another: it is not for the destruction of the lives of men, but for the preservation of their souls.

SERMON VII.

PSALM xlv. 1.

I speak of the things which I have made touching the King, or, *unto the King*.

IN my last discourse, I proceeded so far in my exposition of this mystic marriage-song as to enter upon what I reckon the second section of the whole psalm; consisting of five verses, from the third to the seventh, both inclusive; in which, under images taken from military exploits, the successful propagation of the gospel is described, through the whole of that period which commenced at our Lord's ascension, and will terminate with the triumphs of the church at his second advent.

From the commendation of the comeliness of the King's person, and the gracious-

ness of his speech, (which in the second verse are put figuratively for the perfect innocence and sanctity of our Lord's life on earth, and the sweetness of his gracious doctrine of pardon, peace, and justification,) the psalmist, persevering in the same figurative strain, passes to the topic of his royal bridegroom's military prowess. He accosts the King as a warlike prince, preparing to take the field, — describes his weapons, and the magnificence of his armour, — and promises him victory and universal dominion.

I shall now endeavour to open and explain to you, with God's assistance, the true spiritual meaning of all this high-wrought imagery. But first I must repeat, with some enlargement and explanation, as the fundamental principle of the interpretation I am about to give, the observation with which I closed my last discourse, — namely, that the war in which the psalmist represents the Saviour as engaged is very different from the wars which the princes of this world wage with one another: it is not for the destruction of the lives of men,

but for the preservation of their souls. It may happen, indeed, — it has happened heretofore, — in our own times it has happened, and it will inevitably happen again, that the struggles of Christianity with the adverse faction may kindle actual war between the secular powers, taking part on one side or on the other. This our Lord himself foretold. "Suppose ye," he said, "that I am come to give peace on earth? I came not to send peace, but a sword." Such wars are, on the one side, no less holy, just, and good, than on the other they are wicked and impious; for when the antichristian powers attack religious establishments by the sword, by the sword they may and must be defended. It is the mere cant of puritanism to allege the precept of mutual forgiveness, the prohibitions of returning evil for evil, and of resisting persecution, as reprobating such wars. All those injunctions relate to the conduct of individuals with respect to one another, or with respect to the government of which they are subjects. The individual is to be ready at all times to forgive his personal enemies; he is not to indulge a spirit of

revenge in the retaliation of private injuries; and least of all is he to resist by force even the injustice, as affecting himself, of his lawful sovereign. But when Antichrist arms his powers for the persecution of the faithful and the extinction of the faith, if Christian princes arm their powers to oppose him, their war is godly, and their cause is blessed. These wars, however, are not within the purview of this prophecy; as the sequel of my discourse will show. This prophetic text of the psalmist relates only to that spiritual war which Christ wages with the enemies of man, for man's deliverance, — to the war arising from that enmity which was originally put between the seed of the serpent and the woman's seed.

The offensive weapons in this war of charity, according to the psalmist, are of two sorts, — a sword, and arrows.

The common military sword is a heavy massive weapon, for close engagement: wielded by a strong and skilful arm, it stabs and cuts, opens dreadful gashes

where it falls, severs limbs, lops the head, or cleaves the body.

The arrow is a light missile weapon, which in ancient times was used to annoy the enemy at a distance, and particularly when put to flight. It comes whizzing through the air unseen; and, when it hits, so small is the wound, and so swift the passage of the weapon, that it is scarcely felt till it fixes its sharp point in the very heart.

Now both these weapons, the sword and the arrow, are emblems of one and the same thing; which is no other than the word of God, in its different effects and different manners of operation on the minds of men, represented under these two different images.

The word of God may be divided, indeed, into two parts, — the word of reproof, commination, and terror; and the word of persuasion, promise, and hope. The former holds up to the sinner the picture of himself, — sets forth the turpitude of sin — the

holiness of God — God's hatred of unrighteousness, — and alarms the conscience with the danger of a state of enmity with God, and with denunciations of implacable wrath and endless punishment. The second, the word of persuasion, promise, and hope, sets before the penitent the riches of God's mercy, displayed in the scheme of man's redemption, — points to the cross where man's guilt was expiated, — bids the contrite sinner rely on the Redeemer's intercession, — offers the daily supply of grace to confirm him in his resolutions, and assist him in his efforts to conform himself to the precepts and example of the Saviour, — and promises victory and glory to them that persevere; thus turning despondency into hope, and fear into love. The first, the word of terror, is the sword girt upon Messiah's thigh; the second, the word of persuasion, is the arrow shot from his bow.

For the sense of the first metaphor, we have the authority of the sacred writers themselves. "The sword of the Spirit," says St. Paul to the Ephesians, "is the word of God." And in the epistle to the

Hebrews, the full signification of the figure is opened, and the propriety of the application shown. "For the word of God," says the inspired author, "is quick and powerful (rather, lively and energetic), and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing to the parting of soul and spirit, and to the joints and marrow;" — that is, as the soldier's sword of steel cuts through all the exterior integuments of skin and muscle, to the bone, and even through the hard substance of the bone itself, to the very marrow, and divides the ligaments which keep the joints of the body together, so this spiritual sword of God's awful word penetrates the inmost recesses of the human mind — pierces to the very line of separation, as it were, of the sensitive and the intelligent principle — lops off the animal part — divides the joints where reason and passion are united — sets the intellect free to exert its powers — kills sin in our members — opens passages for grace to enter and enrich the marrow of the soul; and thus delivers the man from his body of death. — Such are the effects for which the

powerful word of terror is compared to a two-edged sword.

The comparison of the word of promise to the arrow is more easily understood; being more familiar, and analogous to those figures of speech which run through all languages, by which, whatever makes a quick and smart impression on the moral feelings is represented under the image of a pointed missile weapon,—as when we speak of "the thrilling darts of harmony," or "the shafts of eloquence." The psalmist speaks of these arrows of God's word as sticking in "the hearts of the King's enemies," — that is, of the enemies of the King Messiah; for he, you will remember, is the only king in question. His enemies, in the highest sense of the word, are those who are avowedly leagued with the apostate faction,—atheists, deists, idolaters, heretics, perverse disputers, — those who in any manner of set design oppose the gospel — who resist the truth by argument, or encounter it with ridicule — who explain it away by sophisticated interpretations, or endeavour to crush it by the force of persecution. Of such hardened

enemies there is no hope, till they have been hacked and hewed, belaboured, and all but slain (in the strong language of one of the ancient prophets), by the heavy sword of the word of terror. But, in a lower sense, all are enemies till they hear of Christ, and the terms of his peace are offered to them. Many such are wrought upon by mild admonition, and receive in their hearts the arrows of the word of persuasion. Such, no doubt, were many of those Jews who were *pricked* to the heart by St. Peter's first sermon on the day of Pentecost: And even those worse enemies, if they can be brought to their feeling by the ghastly wounds and gashes of the terrific sword of the word of threatening, may afterwards be pierced by the arrow, and carry about in their hearts its barbed point. And by the joint effect of these two weapons, the sword and the arrow, the word of terror and the word of persuasion, "peoples," says the psalmist,—that is, whole kingdoms and nations in a mass, "shall fall under thee,"—shall forsake their ancient superstitions, renounce their idols, and submit themselves to Christ.

So much for the offensive weapons, the sword and the arrows. But the defensive armour demands our attention; for it has its use, no doubt, in the Messiah's war. His person, you will remember, is clad, in the third verse, "with refulgent dazzling armour." This may be understood of whatever is admirable and amiable in the external form and appearance of the Christian religion. First, the character of Jesus himself; his piety towards God — his philanthropy towards man — his meekness, humility, ready forgiveness of injuries, patient endurance of pain and death. Secondly, the same light of good works shining, in a less degree, in the lives of his disciples, particularly the apostles and blessed martyrs. Thirdly, whatever is decent and seemly in the government, the discipline, and the rites of the church. All these things, as they tend to draw the admiration and conciliate the good-will of men, and mitigate the malice of the persecutor, are aptly represented under the image of the Messiah's defensive armour, and had a principal share in the effect of making peoples "fall under him."

It yet remains to be explained what is meant, in the psalmist's detail of the Messiah's war, by those "wonders" which "his own right hand was to show him."

"Thy own right hand shall show thee wonders."

Our public translation has it "terrible things." But the notion of terror is not of necessity included in the sense of the original word, as it is used by the sacred writers: It is sometimes, indeed, applied by them to frightful things; but it is also applied, with great latitude, to things extraordinary in their kind, — grand, admirable, amazing, awful, — although they should not be frightful. We have no right, therefore, to take it in the strict sense of "frightful," unless something in the context points to that meaning; which is not the case in this passage. And accordingly, instead of "terrible," we find in some of the oldest English Bibles the better-chosen word "wonderful."

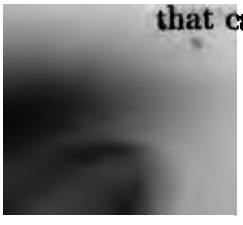
Now the "wonderful things" which Messiah's "own right hand" showed him, I take to be the overthrow of the Pagan

superstition, in the Roman empire and other great kingdoms of the world, by the mere preaching of the gospel, seconded by the exemplary lives and the miracles of the first preachers, and by their patient endurance of imprisonment, torture, and death, for the sake of Christ. It was, indeed, a wonderful thing, wrought by Christ's single arm, when his religion prevailed over the whole system of idolatry, supported as it was by the authority of sovereigns, by the learning of philosophers, and most of all, by the inveterate prejudices of the vulgar, attached to their false gods, by the gratification which their very worship afforded to the sensual passions, and by the natural partiality of mankind in favour of any system, however absurd and corrupt, sanctioned by a long antiquity. It was a wonderful thing, when the Devil's kingdom, with much of its invisible power, lost at once the whole of its external pomp and splendour, — when silence being imposed on his oracles, and spells and enchantments divested of their power, the idolatrous worship which by those engines of deceit had been universally established, and for ages

supported, notwithstanding the antiquity of its institutions, and the bewitching gayety and magnificence of its festivals, fell into neglect, — when its cruel and lascivious rites, so long holden in superstitious veneration, on a sudden became the objects of a just and general abhorrence, — when the unfrequented temples, spoiled of their immense treasures, sunk in ruins, and the images, stript of their gorgeous robes and costly jewels, were thrown into the Tyber, or into the common receptacles of filth and ordure: It was a wonderful thing, when the minds of all men took a sudden turn, — kings became the nursing fathers of the church, statesmen courted her alliance, philosophy embraced her faith, and even the sword was justly drawn in her defence.

These were the "wonderful things" effected by Christ's right hand; and in these this part of the psalmist's prophecy has received its accomplishment. Less than this his words cannot mean; and to more than this they cannot with any certainty be extended, — since these things satisfy all that is of necessity involved in his expressions.

If his expressions went of necessity to "terrible things," or were determined to that meaning by the context, insomuch that the inspired author could be understood to speak, not of things simply wonderful, but wonderful in the particular way of being frightful, an allusion, in that case, might easily be supposed to what is indeed the explicit subject of many other prophecies, — the terrible things to be achieved by the Messiah's own right hand, in the destruction of Antichrist and the slaughter of his armies, in the latter ages. The word of prophecy forewarns us, and we have lived to see the season of the accomplishment set in, that the apostate faction will proceed to that extreme of malice and impiety as to levy actual war against the nations professing Christianity: And after much suffering of the faithful, and bloody struggles of the contending parties, our Lord himself will come from heaven, visibly and in person, to effect the deliverance of his servants, and with his own arm cut off the antichristian armies with tremendous slaughter. This is represented in the prophecies under images that can be understood of nothing but the



havoc of actual battle. "The indignation of Jehovah is upon all the heathen," saith Isaiah, "and his fury upon all their armies. He hath utterly destroyed them; he hath delivered them to the slaughter; and the mountains shall be *melted down* in their blood." The prophet Ezekiel summons all ravenous birds, and all beasts of prey, "to assemble and come to the slaughter which Jehovah should make for them,—a great slaughter on the mountains of Israel (the stage, as it should seem, of Antichrist's last exploits, and of his excision). And ye shall eat flesh and drink blood: The flesh of warriors ye shall eat, and the blood of the priinces of the earth ye shall drink: Ye shall eat fat till ye be cloyed, and drink blood till ye be drunken (the fat and the blood) of the slaughter which I have made for you." In the Apocalypse, when the Son of God comes forth to make an end of the Beast and the False Prophet, and of the armies of kings their confederates, an angel standing in the sun "cries with a loud voice to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together to the supper of the great God; that

ye may eat the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all, freemen and slaves, both small and great." Men of all conditions, it seems, will be united in the impious coalition, to make war against the irresistible conqueror on the white horse, and his army; and will be involved in the great destruction. In a former vision, relating to the same subject, St. John had seen the "great wine-press of God's wrath trodden; and the blood came out of the wine-press even unto the horses' bridles."

Such terrible things will be; and if the psalmist had spoken explicitly of terrible things, I should think an allusion was indeed intended to those scenes of terror, yet future, which however in the appointed season must overtake the wicked world. But as terrible things are not of necessity included in the import of his words, which goes not necessarily farther than "wonderful,"—and as he mentions those wonderful things before the thread of his prophecy is brought down to the second

advent, the season of those exploits of terror,—it becomes us to be cautious how we force a sense upon the psalmist's words which might not be intended by him, or rather by the inspiring Spirit. It will be safer to rest in those wonderful things which actually came to pass within the period he is yet upon, and were undoubtedly brought about by Messiah's power, as the true accomplishment of this part of the prophecy. The suppression of idolatry in the Roman empire, and the establishment of the Christian church upon its ruins, was an event the most wonderful in the history of the Gentile world, to which nothing but the power of God was adequate; and comes up to the whole necessary import of the psalmist's expressions.

The war of this period of the prophecy is finished: The battles have been fought, and the victory is gained. The psalmist in the two next verses, the sixth and seventh, exhibits the King seated on the throne of his Mediatorial kingdom, and governing with perfect justice. He addresses him as God, whose throne is everlasting, and

sceptre straight; as a monarch whose heart is set upon righteousness, whose antipathy is wickedness.

6. "Thy throne, O God! is for ever and ever;
"A straight sceptre is the sceptre of thy royalty.
7. "Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated wickedness;
"Therefore God hath anointed thee, thy own God,
"With the oil of gladness above thy fellows."

It was shown, in my first discourse upon this psalm, how inapplicable this address is to Solomon; and it is obvious that it is equally inapplicable to any earthly monarch: For of no throne but God's can it be affirmed with truth that it is for ever and ever; of no king but of God and of his Christ can it be said that he loves righteousness with a perfect love, and hates wickedness with a perfect hate; of no sceptre but the sceptre of God and of his Christ, that it is a straight sceptre. The sceptre has been from the earliest ages a badge of royalty. It was

originally nothing more than a straight slender rod, studded sometimes for ornament with little nails of gold. It was an emblem of the perfect integrity of the monarch in the exercise of his power, both by himself and by his ministers inflexibly adhering to the straight line of right and justice as a mason or carpenter to his rule. The perfection of the emblem consisted in the straightness of the stick; for every thing else was ornament. The straightness, therefore, ascribed by the psalmist to Messiah's sceptre, is to be understood of the invariable justice of the administration of his government. Now, certainly there have been many kings, both in ancient and in modern times, to whom the praise is due of a cordial regard in general to righteousness and of a settled principle of dislike to wickedness,—many who in the exercise of their authority and the measures of their government have been generally directed by that just sense of right and wrong: But yet kings are not exempt from the frailties of human nature;—the very best of them are, at least in an equal degree with other good men, liable to the surprises of the passions

and the seductions of temptation; insomuch that that predominant love of righteousness and hatred of iniquity, maintaining an absolute ascendancy in the mind, in all times and upon all occasions, which the psalmist attributes to his heavenly king, has belonged to none that ever wore an earthly crown; much less is the perfect straightness of the sceptre, a perfect conformity to the rule of right, to be found in the practice and execution of the governments of the world. It will happen in numberless instances, and from an infinite complication of causes, all reducible to the general head of the infirmity of human nature and the depraved state of fallen man, — from an endless multiplicity of causes it will happen, that the government of the very best king will in execution fall far short of the purity of the king's intentions; and this in governments that are ever so well administered: For if we suppose every one of those who are put in authority under him to be as upright in their intentions as we have supposed the king himself to be, — which must appear a very large and liberal supposition, if we consider the variety of

departments into which the administration of any great government must necessarily be divided, and the great number of persons that must be employed in the affairs of each separate department, — but if we make the supposition that all the officers, from the highest to the lowest, in all the departments, are as good as men can be, still they will be men, and, as men, liable every one of them to error and deception; and for this reason, they will often fail in the execution in what they mean to do the best. This gives no colour to the detestable principle propagated from democratic France over the Continent of Europe, of what is profanely called "the sacred right of insurrection;" nor to similar doctrines broached by sectarian teachers in our own country. It is merely the want of perfection in human nature, of which government and governors, with all things and with all persons human, must partake. Still, with all these imperfections, government is the source of the highest blessings to mankind; insomuch, that the very worst government is preferable to a state of anarchy: And for this reason, the peaceable

submission of the subject to the very worst of kings is one of the most peremptory precepts of Christianity. But I contend, that the perfect undeviating rectitude of intention, and the perfect justice of administration, of which the psalmist speaks, cannot be ascribed, without impiety, to any earthly monarch.

The throne of God, whether we understand it of God's natural dominion over the whole creation, or more particularly of his providential government of the moral world, or, in a still more restricted sense, of Christ's Mediatorial kingdom, is everlasting; and the government, both in the will of the governor and in the execution, is invariably good and just. But the kingdom of the God-Man is in this place intended. This evident from what is said in the seventh verse: " God, even thine own God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows;" *i. e.* God hath advanced thee to a state of bliss and glory above all those whom thou hast vouchsafed to call thy fellows. It is said too, that the love of righteousness and hatred of

wickedness is the cause that God hath so anointed *him*, who yet, in the sixth verse, is himself addressed as God. It is manifest that these things can be said only of that person in whom the Godhead and the manhood are united,—in whom the human nature is the subject of the unction, and the elevation to the Mediatorial kingdom is the reward of the Man Jesus: For Christ being in his divine nature equal with the Father, is incapable of any exaltation. Thus, the unction with the oil of gladness, and the elevation above his fellows, characterize the manhood; and the perpetual stability of the throne, and the unsullied justice of the government, declare the Godhead. It is therefore with the greatest propriety that this text is applied to Christ, in the epistle to the Hebrews, and made an argument of his divinity; not by any forced accommodation of words which in the mind of the author related to another subject, but according to the true intent and purpose of the psalmist, and the literal sense and only consistent exposition of his words.

The psalmist is now come down, by a

regular and complete though a summary review of the principal occurrences of what may be called the history of the Mediator and his kingdom, the Redeemer's life on earth, his exaltation to his throne in heaven, the successful propagation of the gospel after his ascension, the suppression of idolatry, and the establishment of the Christian religion in the principal empires and kingdoms of the world, — the psalmist, through this detail, is come down to the epoch of the second advent, which immediately introduces the great event which has given occasion to the whole song — the consummation of the church's happiness and Messiah's glory here on earth, in the public marriage of the great King with the wife of his love. This occupies the whole sequel of the psalm; and will be the subject of my next discourse.

SERMON VIII.

PSALM xlv. 1.

I speak of the things which I have made touching the King, or, *unto the King*.

WE have followed the holy psalmist step by step through his accurate though summary prospective view of the principal occurrences in the history of the Mediator and his kingdom upon earth, from our Lord's first appearance in the flesh to the epoch of his second advent. I have explained to you the several images under which the psalmist represents the events of this interval. I have shown how easily they apply to Christ and his gospel — how inapplicable they are to any other subject. I showed you, that under the figures of comeliness of person and urbanity of speech the psalmist describes the

unexampled sanctity of the life of Jesus, and the high consolations of his doctrine: That under the figure of a warrior clad in dazzling armour, with his sword girt upon his thigh, and shooting his arrows after a flying enemy, Christ is described as waging his spiritual war against sin and Satan by his powerful word, — represented as a sword, when it is employed to terrify the conscience of the sinner, and rouse him by denunciations of wrath and punishment to a sense of his danger; as an arrow, in its milder effects, when it pricks the heart with that godly remorse which brings on the sorrow that works true repentance, and terminates in hope and love. The splendid defensive armour is an emblem of whatever is externally venerable and lovely in Christianity, and conduces to conciliate the good-will of men, and mitigate the malice of the persecutor. The subjugation of nations, by the prosecution of this war, is the triumph of the church over idolatry, which first took place in the reign of Constantine the Great, when the Christian religion was established in the Roman empire, and idolatry put down by that emperor's authority. A few

years after, the idolatrous temples were finally closed by his successors.

The battles being fought and the victory gained, the conqueror is saluted by the holy psalmist as the God-Man, seated upon the everlasting throne of his Mediatorial kingdom. The psalmist then proceeds to that great event which is to take place upon the second advent of our Lord, the prospect of which has been the occasion of the whole song, — the consummation of the church's happiness and Messiah's glory here on earth, in the public marriage of the great King with the wife of his love. And upon this subject the inspired poet dwells throughout the whole sequel of the psalm; which makes, indeed, the greater part of the entire composition.

Before I enter upon the explanation of particulars in this part of the song, it may be proper to offer a few words upon the general propriety and significance of the image of a marriage, as it is applied here, and in other parts of Scripture, to Messiah and his church.

Our Lord said of himself that he came to "preach the gospel to the poor;" and the same thing may be said of the word of revelation in general, — that it was given for the instruction of all mankind, the lowest as well as the highest, the most illiterate as well as the wise and learned; and if with any difference, with a special regard to the benefit of those who from their condition were the most deficient in the means of natural improvement. It may be reckoned, therefore, a necessary characteristic of divine revelation, that it shall be delivered in a manner the most adapted to what are vulgarly called the meanest capacities. And by this perspicuity, both of precept and of doctrine, the whole Bible is remarkably distinguished: For although St. Peter speaks of things in it hard to be understood, he speaks of such things only as could never have been understood at all had they not been revealed; and, being revealed, are yet not capable of proof or explanation upon scientific principles, but rest solely on the authority of the revelation. Not that the terms in which these discoveries are made are obscure and ambiguous in their

meaning, or that the things themselves, however hard for the pride of philosophy, are not of easy digestion to an humble faith. Obscurities undoubtedly have arisen, from the great antiquity of the sacred writings, from the changes which time makes in language, and from some points of ancient history become dark or doubtful: But these affect only particular passages, and bring no difficulty at all upon the general doctrine of revelation, which is the only thing of universal and perpetual importance. Now, the method of teaching which the Holy Spirit hath employed to adapt the profoundest mysteries of religion to the most ordinary capacities, has been, in all ages, to propound them by his inspired messengers, the prophets under the law, and the apostles in the first ages of Christianity, in figurative expressions — in images and allusions, taken either from the most striking objects of the senses in the works of nature, or from human life. The relation between Christ and his church, it is evident, must be of a nature not to be adequately typified by any thing in the material world; and nothing could be found in human life which

might so aptly represent it as the relation of husband and wife in the holy state of wedlock: And in this the analogy is so perfect, that the notion of the ancient Jews has received the express sanction of St. Paul, that the relation of the Saviour and the church was typified in the union of our first parents, and in the particular manner of Eve's formation out of the substance of Adam. The most striking particulars of the resemblance are these. The union, in both cases, in the natural case of man and wife, and the spiritual case of Messiah and the church, is a union of the most entire affection and the warmest mutual love between unequals; contrary to the admired maxim of the heathen moralist, that friendship was not to be found but between equals. The maxim may be true in all human friendship except the conjugal, but fails completely in the love between Christ and the church, in which the affection on both sides is the most cordial, though the rank of the parties be the most disparate. Secondly, The union is indissoluble, except by a violation of the nuptial vow. But the great resemblance of all lies in this—the never-failing protection

and support afforded by the husband to the wife; and the abstraction of the affections from all other objects on the part of the wife, and the surrender of her whole heart and mind to the husband. In these circumstances principally, but in many others also, which the time will not permit me to recount, the propriety and significance of the type consists. It is applied with some variety, and with more or less accuracy, in different parts of holy writ, according to the purpose of the writer. Where the church catholic is considered simply in its totality, without distinction of the parts of which it is composed, the whole church is taken as the wife; but when it is considered as consisting of two great branches, the church of the natural Israel and the church of the Gentiles, of which two branches the whole was composed in the primitive ages, and will be composed again, then the former is considered as the wife, or queen-consort, and the Gentile congregations as her daughters, or ladies of honour of her court. And in this manner the type is used in many parts of the prophet Isaiah, and very remarkably in this psalm.

In the part of it which we are now about to expound, the holy psalmist having seated the King Messiah on his everlasting throne, proceeds to the magnificence of his court, as it appeared on the wedding-day. In which, the thing which first strikes him and fixes his attention, is the majesty and splendour of the King's own dress; which indeed is described by the single circumstance of the profusion of rich perfumes with which it was scented: But this by inference implies every thing else of elegance and costly ornament; for among the nations of the East, in ancient times, perfume was considered as the finishing of the dress of persons of condition when they appeared in public; and modern manners give us no conception of the costliness of the materials employed in the composition of their odours, their care and nicety in the preparation of them, and the quantity in which they were used. The high-priest of the Jews was not sprinkled with a few scanty drops of the perfume of the sanctuary; but his person was so bedewed with it that it literally ran down from his beard to the skirts of his garment. The high-priest of the Jews in his robes of office

was in this, as I shall presently explain, and in every circumstance, the living type of our Great High-Priest. The psalmist describes the fragrance of Messiah's garments to be such as if the aromatic woods had been the very substance out of which the robes were made.

"Thy garments are all myrrh, aloes, and cassia."

The sequel of this verse is somewhat obscure in the original, by reason of the ambiguity of one little word, which different interpreters have taken differently. I shall give you what in my judgment is the literal rendering of the passage; and trust I shall not find it difficult to make the meaning of it very clear.

"Thy garments are all myrrh, aloes, and cassia,

"Excelling the palaces of ivory,

"Excelling those which delight thee."

Ivory was highly valued and admired among the Jews and other Eastern nations of antiquity, for the purity of its white, the delicate smoothness of the surface, and the durability of the substance; being not liable to tarnish or rust like metals, or, like wood,

to rot or to be worm-eaten. Hence it was a favourite ornament in the furniture of the houses and palaces of great men; and all such ornamental furniture was plentifully perfumed. The psalmist therefore says, that the fragrance of the King's garments far exceeded any thing that met the nostrils of the visitors in the stateliest and best furnished palaces. But this is not all: He says, besides, that these perfumes of the royal garments "excel those which delight thee." To understand this, you must recollect that there were two very exquisite perfumes used in the symbolical service of the temple, both made of the richest spices, mixed in certain proportions, and by a process directed by the law. The one was used to anoint every article of the furniture of the sanctuary, and the robes and persons of the priests. The composition of it was not to be imitated, nor was it to be applied to the person of any but a consecrated priest, upon pain of death. Some, indeed, of the kings of David's line were anointed with it; but when this was done, it was by the special direction of a prophet; and it was to intimate, as I apprehend, the relation of that

royal house to the eternal priesthood, to be instituted in due season in that family. The other was a compound of other ingredients, which made the incense that was burnt upon the golden altar as a grateful odour to the Lord. This too was most holy; and to attempt to make the like for private use was a capital offence.

Now the perfumed garments of the psalmist's King denote the very same thing which was typified under the law by the perfumed garments of the high-priest; the psalmist's King being indeed the real person of whom the high-priest, in every particular of his office, his services, and his dress, was the type. The perfumed garments were typical, first, of the graces and virtues of the Redeemer himself in his human character; secondly, of whatever is refreshing, encouraging, consoling, and cheering, in the external ministration of the word; and thirdly, of the internal comforts of the Holy Spirit. But the incense fumed upon the golden altar was typical of a far inferior, though of a precious and holy thing, — namely, of whatever is pleasing to God in

the faith, the devotions, and the good works of the saints. Now the psalmist says that the fragrance breathing from the garments of the King far excels not only the sweetest odours of any earthly monarch's palace, but that it surpasses those spiritual odours of sanctity in which the King himself delights. The consolations which the faithful under all their sufferings receive from him, in the example of his holy life, the ministration of the word and sacraments, and the succours of the Spirit, are far beyond the proportion of any thing they have to offer in return to him, in their praises, their prayers, and their good lives; notwithstanding in these their services he condescends to take delight. This is the doctrine of this highly mystic text, that the value of all our best works of faith and obedience, even in our own eyes, must sink into nothing when they are contrasted with the exuberant mercy of God extended to us through Christ.

Such is the fragrance breathing from the great King's wedding-garments. We proceed to other particulars in the magnificent appearance of his court on the wedding-

day, figurative of the glory of the church in its final condition of purity and peace, and of the rank and order of particular churches.

" Kings' daughters are among thy honourable women."

You will observe that the word " women," in the Bibles of the larger size, is printed in that character which is used to distinguish the words which have been inserted by the translators, to make the sense perspicuous to the English reader, without any thing expressly corresponding in the original. Omitting the word " women," our translators might have given the verse, according to their conceptions of the preceding word which describes the women, thus:

" Kings' daughters are among thy honourables;"

i. e. among the persons appointed to services of honour. But the original word thus expressed by " honourable women," or by " honourables," is indeed applied to whatever is rare and valued in its kind, and, for that reason, to illustrious persons, ennobled and distinguished by marks of

royal favour: and in this sense it certainly is figuratively applicable to the persons whom I shall show to be intended here. But the primary meaning of the word is "bright, sparkling;" and it is particularly applied to brilliant gems, or precious stones. Sparkling is in all languages figuratively applied to female beauty; and the imagery of the original would be better preserved, though the sense would be much the same, if the passage were thus rendered:

"Kings' daughters are among the bright beauties of thy court."

The beauty certainly is mystic, — the beauty of evangelical sanctity and innocence. But who and what are these kings' daughters, the lustre of whose beauty adorns the great monarch's court? "Kings' daughters," in the general language of holy writ, are the kingdoms and peoples which they govern, of which, in common speech, they are called fathers. The expression may be so taken here; and then the sense will be, that the greatest kingdoms and empires of the world, converted to the faith of Christ, and shining in the beauty

of the good works of true holiness, will be united, at the season of the wedding, to Messiah's kingdom. But, inasmuch as Messiah's kingdom is not one of the kingdoms of the world, and that secular kingdoms will never be immediately and in their secular capacity vassals of his kingdom, I rather think that the kings' daughters mentioned here are the various national churches fostered for many ages by the piety of Christian princes, and now brought to the perfection of beauty, by the judgments which shall have purged every one of them of all things that offend: for they may well be called "kings' daughters," of whom kings and queens are called, in the prophetic language, the fathers and the mothers.

From these the psalmist turns our attention to another lady, distinguished above them all by her title, her place, and the superlative richness of her robes.

"Kings' daughters are among the bright
beauties of thy court.
"At thy right hand the consort has her
station,

" In standard gold of Ophir."

Some expositors have imagined that the consort is an emblem of the church catholic in her totality,—the kings' daughters, typical of the several particular churches of which that one universal is composed. But the queen-consort here is unquestionably the Hebrew church,—the church of the natural Israel, reunited, by her conversion, to her husband, and advanced to the high prerogative of the mother church of Christendom: And the kings' daughters are the churches which had been gathered out of the Gentiles, in the interval between the expulsion of this wife and the taking of her home again,—that is, between the dispersion of the Jews by the Romans, and their restoration. The restoration of the Hebrew church to the rights of a wife—to the situation of the queen-consort in Messiah's kingdom upon earth—is the constant strain of prophecy. To prove this, by citing all the passages to that purpose, would be to transcribe whole chapters of some of the prophets, and innumerable detached passages from almost all. In addition to those which I have

already cited, in my former discourses upon this subject, I shall produce only the latter part of the second chapter of Hosea. In that chapter, Jehovah, after discarding the incontinent wife, and threatening terrible severity of punishment, adds, that nevertheless the time should come when she should again address her offended lord by the endearing name of husband. "And I will betroth thee to myself for ever. Yes; I will betroth thee to myself, with justice, and with righteousness, and with exuberant kindness, and with tender love. Yes; with faithfulness, to myself I will betroth thee." These promises are made to the woman that had been discarded, and cannot be understood of mercies to be extended to any other. The prophet Isaiah speaks to the same effect, and describes the Gentile converts as becoming, upon the reunion, children of the pardoned wife. And I must not omit to mention, that St. Paul, in his epistle to the Romans, to clear up the mystery of God's dealing with the Jews, tells us, that "blindness is in part only happened unto Israel, till the time shall arrive for the fulness of the

Gentiles to come in; and then all Israel shall be saved; for the gifts and calling of God are without repentance." To expound these predictions of the ancient prophets, and this declaration of the apostle, of any thing but the restoration of the natural Israel; is to introduce ambiguity and equivocation into the plainest oracles of God.

The standard gold upon the queen's robe denotes the treasures of which the church is the depositary, — the written word, and the dispensation of grace and forgiveness of sins by the due administration of the sacraments.

The psalmist, beholding the queen in her costly robes, on the King's right hand, interrupts the progress of his description with a word of momentous advice addressed to her.

" Hearken, O daughter! and consider;
" Incline thine ear; and forget
" Thine own people, and thy father's
house:

"So shall the King set his heart upon thy beauty.

"Truly he is thy Lord; therefore worship thou him."

If a princess from a distant land, taken in marriage by a great king, were admonished to forget her own people and her father's house, the purport of the advice would easily be understood to be, that she should divest herself of all attachment to the customs of her native country and to the style of her father's court; and learn to speak the language, and assume the dress, the manners, and the taste of her husband's people. The "father's house" and "own people," which the psalmist advises the queen-consort to forget, is the ancient Jewish religion in its external form,—the ceremonies of the temple service,—the sacrifices and the typical purgations of the Levitical priesthood. Not that she is to forget God's gracious promises to Abraham, nor the covenant with her forefathers (the benefit of which she will enjoy to the very end of time), nor the many wonderful deliverances that were wrought for them: Nor is she to forget the history of her na-

tion, preserved in the Scriptures of the Old Testament; nor the predictions of Moses and her prophets, the full accomplishment of which she will at this time experience: And historically, she is never to forget even the ceremonial law; for the Levitical rites were nothing less than the gospel itself in hieroglyphics; and, rightly understood, they afford the most complete demonstration of the coherence of revelation with itself, in all its different stages, and the best evidence of its truth; showing that it has been the same in substance in all ages, differing only in external form, in the rites of worship, and in the manner of teaching. But, practically, the rites of their ancient worship are to be forgotten,—that is, laid aside; for they never were of any other importance than in reference to the gospel, as the shadow is of no value but as it resembles the substance. Practically, therefore, the restored Hebrew church is to abandon her ancient Jewish rites, and become mere and pure Christian; and thus she will secure the conjugal affections of her husband, and render the beauty of her person perfect in his eyes. And this

she is bound to do; for her royal husband is indeed her Lord: Moses was no more than his servant, — the prophets after Moses, servants in a lower rank than he. But the authority of Christ the husband is paramount over all; he is entitled to her unreserved obedience; he is indeed her God, entitled to her adoration.

This submission of the consort to her wedded Lord will set her high in the esteem of the churches of the Gentiles.

" See the daughter of Tyre, with a gift;
" The wealthiest of the people shall entreat thy favour."

The " daughter of Tyre," according to the principles of interpretation we have laid down, must be a church established either literally at Tyre, or in some country held forth under the image of Tyre. Ancient Tyre was famous for her commerce, her wealth, her excellence in the fine arts, her luxury, the profligate debauched manners of her people, and the grossness of her idolatry. The " daughter of Tyre" appearing before the queen-consort " with a gift,"

is a figurative prediction that churches will be established, under the protection of the government, in countries which had been distinguished for profligacy, dissipated manners, and irreligion. It is intimated in the next line, that some of these churches will be rich; that is, rich in spiritual riches, which are the only riches of a church, in the mystic language of prophecy,— rich in the holy lives of their members, in the truth of their creeds, and the purity of their external forms of worship, and in God's favour. But notwithstanding this wealth of their own, these churches will pay willing homage to the royal consort, their eldest sister, the metropolitical church of Jerusalem.

From this address to the queen, the psalmist, in the thirteenth verse, returns to the description of the great scene lying in vision before him.

"The King's daughter is all-glorious within." In this line, the same personage that has hitherto been represented as the King's wife seems to be called his daughter.

This, however, is a matter upon which commentators have been much divided. Some have imagined that a new personage is introduced: that the King's wife is, as I have all along maintained, the figure of the Hebrew church; but that this "daughter of the King" is the Christian church in general, composed of Jews and Gentiles indiscriminately, considered as the daughter of the King Messiah by his Hebrew queen. This was Martin Luther's notion. Others have thought that the wife is the Hebrew church by itself, and the daughter the church of the Gentiles by itself. But neither of these explanations are perfectly consistent with the imagery of this psalm. Far to be preferred is the exposition of the late learned and pious Bishop Horne; who rejects the notion of the introduction of a new personage, and observes, "that the connexion between Christ and his spouse unites in itself every relation and every affection." She is therefore daughter, wife, and sister, all in one. The same seems to have been the notion of a learned Dominican of the seventeenth century; who remarks, that the Empress Julia, in the legends of some

ancient coins, is called the daughter of Augustus, whose wife she was.

But, with much general reverence for the opinions of these learned commentators, I am persuaded that the stops have been misplaced in the Hebrew manuscripts, by the Jewish critics, upon the last revision of the text;—that translators have been misled by their false division of the text, and expositors misled by translators. The stops being rightly placed, the Hebrew words give this sense:

"She is all-glorious,"—

She, the consort of whom we have been speaking, is glorious in every respect,—

"Daughter of a king."

That is, she is a princess born (by which title she is saluted in the Canticles): she is glorious, therefore, for her high birth. She is, indeed, of high and heavenly extraction: she may say of herself, collectively, what the apostle has taught her sons to say individually: "Of his own will begat he us with the word of his truth." Accordingly, in the Apocalypse, the bride,

the Lamb's wife, is "the holy Jerusalem descending out of heaven from God."

The psalmist goes on.

"Her inner garment is bespangled with gold;

"Her upper garment is embroidered with the needle."

These two lines require little comment. The spangles of gold upon the consort's inner garment are the same thing with the standard gold of Ophir of the ninth verse, —the invaluable treasure with which the church is endowed, with the custody and distribution of which she is intrusted. The embroidery of her upper garment is, whatever there is of beauty in her external form, her discipline, and her rites.

The psalmist adds —

"She is conducted in procession to the King." Our public translation has simply —"She is brought;" but the original word implies the pomp and conduct of a public procession. The greatest caution is requisite in attempting to interpret, in the detail of circumstances, the predictions of

things yet remote. We may venture, however, to apply this conducting of the queen to the palace of her lord, to some remarkable assistance which the Israelites will receive from the Christian nations of the Gentile race, in their resettlement in the Holy Land; which seems to be mentioned under the very same image by the prophet Isaiah, at the end of the eighteenth chapter, and by the prophet Zephaniah, chapter third, verse tenth; and is clearly the subject of more explicit prophecies. "Thus saith Jehovah," speaking to Zion, in the prophet Isaiah, "Behold I will lift up my hand to the Gentiles, and set up my standard to the peoples; and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders." And in another place, "They (the Gentiles, mentioned in the preceding verse) shall bring all your brethren, for an offering unto Jehovah, out of all nations, upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon swift beasts, to my holy mountain Jerusalem."

But the psalmist is struck with the appear-

ance of a very remarkable band which makes a part in this procession.

" She is conducted in procession to the King.
" Virgins follow her, her companions,
" Coming unto thee:
" They are conducted in procession, with festivity and rejoicing:
" They enter the palace of the King."

These virgins seem to be different persons from the kings' daughters of the ninth verse. Those " kings' daughters" were already distinguished ladies of the monarch's own court: these virgins are introduced to it by the queen; they follow her as part of her retinue, and are introduced as her companions. The former represent, as we conceive, the churches of Gentile origin, formed and established in the period of the wife's disgrace: these virgins we take to be new churches, formed among nations not sooner called to the knowledge of the gospel and the faith in Christ, at the very season of the restoration of Israel, in whose conversion the restored Hebrew church may have a principal share. This is that fulness of the Gentiles of which St. Paul speaks as

coincident in time with the recovery of the Jews, and, in a great degree, the effect of their conversion. " Have they stumbled that they should fall?" saith the apostle, speaking of the natural Israel: " God forbid: but rather, through their fall, salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to emulation. Now, if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and their loss the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their fulness? For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead?" In these texts, the apostle clearly lays out this order of the business, in the conversion of the whole world to Christ: first, the rejection of the unbelieving Jews: then, the first call of the Gentiles: the recovery of the Jews, after a long season of obstinacy and blindness, at last provoked to emulation, brought to a right understanding of God's dispensations, by that very call which hitherto has been one of their stumbling-blocks: and lastly, in consequence of the conversion of the Jews, a prodigious influx from the Gentile nations yet unconverted, and immersed in

the darkness and corruptions of idolatry; which make little less than two thirds, not of the civilized, but of the inhabited world. The churches of this new conversion seem to be the virgins, the queen's bridemaids, in the nuptial procession.

In the next verse (the sixteenth), the psalmist again addresses the queen.

" Thy children shall be in the place of thy fathers;
" Thou shalt make them princes in all the earth."

Thy children shall be what thy fathers were, God's peculiar people; and shall hold a distinguished rank and character in the earth.

The psalmist closes his divine song with a distich setting forth the design and predicting the effect of his own performance.

" I will perpetuate the remembrance of thy name to all generations;
" Insomuch that the peoples shall praise thee for ever."

By inditing this marriage-song, he hoped to be the means of celebrating the Re-

deemer's name from age to age, and of inciting the nations of the world to join in his praise. The event has not disappointed the holy prophet's expectation. His composition has been the delight of the congregations of the faithful for little less than three thousand years. For one thousand and forty, it was a means of keeping alive in the synagogue the hope of the Redeemer to come: For eighteen hundred since, it has been the means of perpetuating in Christian congregations the grateful remembrance of what has been done, — anxious attention to what is doing, — and the cheering hope of the second coming of our Lord; who surely cometh to turn away ungodliness from Jacob, and to set up a standard to the nations which yet sit in darkness and the shadow of death. "He that witnesseth these things saith, Behold I come quickly. And the Spirit saith, Come! and the bride saith, Come! and let every one that heareth say, Amen! Even so! Come, Lord Jesus!"

SERMON IX.

1 JOHN, v. 6.

This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ;—not by water only, but by water and blood.

FOR the surer interpretation of these words, it will be necessary to take a general view of the sacred book in which we find them written, and to consider the subject-matter of the whole, but more particularly of the two last chapters.

The book goes under the title of "The General Epistle of St. John." But in the composition of it, narrowly inspected, nothing is to be found of the epistolary form. It is not inscribed either to any individual, like St. Paul's to Timothy and Titus, or the second of the two which follow it, "to the well-beloved Gaius,"—nor to any particu-

lar church, like St. Paul's to the churches of Rome, Corinth, Ephesus, and others, — nor to the faithful of any particular region, like St. Peter's first epistle, "to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia," — nor to any principal branch of the Christian church, like St. Paul's to the Hebrews, — nor to the Christian church in general, like the second of St. Peter's, "to them that had obtained like precious faith with him," and like St. Jude's, "to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called:" It bears no such inscription: It begins without salutation, and ends without benediction. It is true, the writer sometimes speaks, but without naming himself in the first person, — and addresses his reader, without naming him in the second. But this colloquial style is very common in all writings of a plain familiar cast: Instances of it occur in St. John's Gospel; and it is by no means a distinguishing character of epistolary composition. It should seem that this book hath for no other reason acquired the title of an epistle, but that, in the first formation of

the canon of the New Testament, it was put into the same volume with the didactic writings of the apostles, which, with this single exception, are all in the epistolary form. It is indeed a didactic discourse upon the principles of Christianity, both in doctrine and practice: And whether we consider the sublimity of its opening, with the fundamental topics of God's perfections, man's depravity, and Christ's propitiation, — the perspicuity with which it propounds the deepest mysteries of our holy faith, and the evidence of the proof which it brings to confirm them; whether we consider the sanctity of its precepts, and the energy of argument with which they are persuaded and enforced, — the dignified simplicity of language in which both doctrine and precept are delivered; whether we regard the importance of the matter, the propriety of the style, or the general spirit of ardent piety and warm benevolence, united with a fervid zeal, which breathes throughout the whole composition, — we shall find it in every respect worthy of the holy author to whom the constant tradition of the church ascribes it, "the disciple whom Jesus loved."

The particular subject of the two last chapters is the great doctrine of the incarnation, or, in St. John's own words, of Christ's coming in the flesh. It may seem that I ought to say, the two doctrines of the incarnation and the atonement: But if I so said, though I should not say any thing untrue, I should speak improperly; for the incarnation of our Lord and the atonement made by him are not two separate doctrines: *They are one;* the doctrine of atonement being included in that of the incarnation, rightly understood, and as it is stated by St. John.

The doctrine of the incarnation in its whole amount is this: That one of the three persons of the God was united to a man, *i. e.* to a human body and a human soul, in the person of Jesus, in order to expiate the guilt of the whole human race, original and actual, by the merit, death, and sufferings, of the man so united to the Godhead. This atonement was the end of the incarnation: And the two articles reciprocate; for an incarnation is implied and presupposed in the Scripture doctrine of atonement, as

the necessary means in the end: For if satisfaction was to be made to Divine justice for the sins of men, by vicarious obedience and vicarious sufferings, in such a way (and in no other way could it be consistent with Divine wisdom) as might attach the pardoned offender to God's service, upon a principle of love and gratitude, it was essential to this plan, that God himself should take a principal part in all that his justice required to be done and suffered, to make room for his mercy; and the divine nature itself being incapable of suffering, it was necessary to the scheme of pardon, that the Godhead should condescend to unite to itself the nature capable.

For, make the supposition, if you please, that after the fall of Adam another perfect man had been created: Suppose that this perfect man had fulfilled all righteousness, — that, like our Lord, he had been exposed to temptations of Satan far more powerful than those to which our first parents yielded; and that, like our Lord, he had baffled Satan in every attempt: Suppose this perfect man had consented to

offer up his own life as a ransom for other lives forfeited, and to suffer in his own person the utmost misery a creature could be made to suffer, to avert punishment from Adam, and from Adam's whole posterity, —the life he would have had to offer would have been but the life of one; the lives forfeited were many. Could one life be a ransom for more than one? Could the sufferings of one single man, upon any principle upon which public justice may exact and accept vicarious punishment, expiate the guilt of more than one other man? Could it expiate the apostacy of millions? It is true, that in human governments the punishment of a few is sometimes accepted as a satisfaction for the offence of many; as in military punishments, when a regiment is decimated. But the cases will bear no comparison. The regiment has perhaps deserved lenity by former good services; which in the case between God and man cannot be alleged. The satisfaction of the tenth man goes to no farther effect than a pardon for the other nine of the single individual crime that is passed: The law remains in force; and the nine,

who for that time escape, continue subject to its rigour, and still liable to undergo the punishment, if the offence should be repeated. But such is the exuberance of mercy in man's redemption, that the expiation extends not only to innumerable offences past, but to many that are yet to come. The severity of the law itself is mitigated; the hand-writing of ordinances is blotted out; and duty henceforward is exacted upon a principle of allowance for human frailty. And who will have the folly or the hardiness to say, that the suffering virtue of one mere man would have been a sufficient price for such a pardon? It must be added, that when human authority accepts an inadequate satisfaction for offences involving multitudes, the lenity, in many cases, arises from a policy founded on a prudent estimation of the imperfection of power in human government, which might sustain a diminution of its strength by the loss of numbers. But God hath no need of the wicked man; it would be no diminution of strength to his government if a world should perish: It is therefore from pure mercy that he ever spares. The

disobedience of our first parents was nothing less than a confederacy with the apostate spirit against the sovereign authority of God: And if such offenders are spared by such a sovereign, it must be in a way which shall unite the perfection of mercy with the perfection of justice; for in God mercy and justice must equally be perfect.

Since, then, one mere man could make no expiation of the sins of myriads, make, if you please, another supposition. Suppose an angel had undertaken for us, — had desired to assume our mortal nature, and to do and suffer for us, what, done and suffered by a man, we have found would have been inadequate. We shall then have the life of one incarnate angel, still a single life, a ransom for myriads of men's lives forfeited; and the merit and sufferings of one angel to compensate the guilt of myriads of men, and to be an equivalent for their punishment. I fear the amended supposition has added little or nothing to the value of the pretended satisfaction. Whatever reverence may be due from man in his present con-

dition upon earth to the holy angels as his superiors, what are they in the sight of God? They are nothing better now than the glorified saints in heaven will hereafter be; and "God charges even his angels with folly, and the heavens are not pure in his sight."

But admit that either a perfect man or an incarnate angel had been able to pay the forfeit for us; and suppose that the forfeit had been paid by a person thus distinct and separate from the Godhead: What effect would have been produced, by a pardon so obtained, in the mind of the pardoned offender? Joy, no doubt, for an unexpected deliverance from impending vengeance, — love for the person, man or angel, who had wrought the deliverance, — remorse, that his crimes had involved another's innocence in misery; but certainly no attachment to the service of the sovereign. The deliverer might have been loved; but the Being whose justice exacted the satisfaction would have remained the object of mere fear, unmixed with love, or rather of fear mixed with aversion. Pardon thus obtained never could have inflamed the

repentant sinner's bosom with that love of God which alone can qualify an intelligent creature for the enjoyment of the Creator's presence. This could only be effected by the wonderful scheme in which Mercy and Truth are made to kiss each other, — when the *same God* who in *one person* exacts the punishment, *in another himself* sustains it; and thus makes *his own mercy* pay the satisfaction to *his own justice*.

So essential was the incarnation of the Son of God to the effectual atonement of man's guilt by the shedding of his blood. On the other hand, the need there was of such atonement is the only cause that can be assigned which could induce the Son of God to stoop to be made man: For had the instruction of man, as some have dreamed, been the only purpose of our Saviour's coming, a mere man might have been impowered to execute the whole business; for whatever knowledge the mind of man can be made to comprehend, a man might be made the instrument to convey.

This inseparable and necessary connexion

with the doctrine of atonement constitutes an essential difference between the awful mystery of the incarnation in the Christian system, and those avatars in the superstitious religion of the Indian Brahmin which have been compared with it, but in which it is profanely mimicked rather than imitated. Yet the comparison is not unfounded, nor without its use, if it be conducted with due reverence and circumspection. In those impious incoherent fables, as in all the Pagan mythology, and in the very worst of the Pagan rites, vestiges are discernible of the history, the revelations, and the rites of the earliest of the patriarchal ages; and thus the worst corruptions of idolatry may be brought to bear an indirect testimony to the truth of revelation. But we must be cautious, that, in making the comparison, we mistake not a hideously distorted picture for a flattered likeness — a disfigured for an embellished copy; lest we be inadvertently and insensibly reconciled to the impure and blasphemous fictions of idolatry — to her obscene and savage rites, as nothing worse than elegant adumbrations of sacred truth in

significant allegory. In the numerous successive incarnations of Veeshnu, the Deity is embodied for subordinate and partial purposes, altogether unworthy of that manner of interference. The incarnation of Christ was for a purpose which God only could accomplish, and God himself could accomplish in no other way: It was for the execution of a plan which Divine wisdom could alone contrive — Divine love and Almighty power could alone effect: It was to rescue those from endless misery whom Divine justice (which, because it is mere and very justice, must be inflexible) demanded for its victims.

It is therefore with great truth and reason that St. John sets forth this as the cardinal doctrine of Christianity; insomuch, that he speaks of the belief of this article as the accomplishment of our Christian warfare — the attainment at least of that faith which with certainty overcometh the world. — "This," he says, "is the victory which overcometh the world, even our faith." Then he adds — "Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus

is the Son of God?" "Son of God" is a title that belongs to our Lord in his human character, describing him as that man who became the Son of God by union with the Godhead; as "Son of Man," on the contrary, is a title which belongs to the Eternal Word, describing that person of the Godhead who was made man by uniting himself to the Man Jesus. To believe, therefore, that Jesus is the Son of God, is to believe that he is God himself incarnate. This, the apostle says, is the faith which overcometh the world; inspiring the Christian with fortitude to surmount the temptations of the world, in whatever shape they may assail him. On the other hand, the denial of this great truth, so animating to the believer's hopes, he represents as the beginning of that apostacy which is to come to its height in the latter ages, as one of the characters of Antichrist. "Ye have heard," he says, "that Antichrist shall come: Even now there are many Antichrists. Who is a liar, but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is Antichrist, denying the Father and the Son." And again, "Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is

come in the flesh, is of God; and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is not of God: And this is that spirit of Antichrist whereof ye have heard that it should come, and now already is it in the world." "The Christ" is a name properly alluding to the inauguration of the Redeemer to his triple office of prophet, priest, and king, by the unction from above: But in the phraseology of the heretics of the apostolic age, it was used as a name of that Divine Being with whom we maintain but they denied an union of the Man Jesus. To deny therefore that Jesus is the Christ, was, in their sense of the word, "Christ," to deny that he is the Son of God, or God himself incarnate. He that denieth this, says the apostle, is a liar, and is Antichrist. Two remarkable sects of these lying Antichrists arose in the apostles' days — the sect of the Cerinthian heretics, who denied the divinity of our Saviour; and the sect of the Docetæ, who denied his manhood, maintaining that the body of Jesus, and every thing he appeared to do and suffer in it, was mere illusion. Thus, both equally denied the incarnation; both therefore equally

were liars and Antichrists: And to give equal and direct contradiction to the lies of both, St. John delivers the truth in these terms, that "Jesus is the Christ come in the flesh."

In my text, the apostle having stated the doctrine in the preceding verse, gives a brief summary of the irresistible evidence by which it is confirmed to us; which he opens more distinctly, but still in very few comprehensive words, in the two subsequent verses. The evidence is such as must command the assent of all who understand the component parts of it; and these parts are intelligible to all who are well instructed in their Bibles: So that, of all evidence, at the same time that it is the most profound, it seems to be the most popular, and the best calculated to work a general conviction. It is much to be lamented that this evidence has been totally overlooked by those who, with much ostentation of philological learning which they possessed, and of metaphysical which they possessed not, have composed laboured *demonstrations* (as they presume to call them) of natural and revealed re-

ligion,—*demonstrations* which have made, I fear, more infidels than converts. The apostle's demonstration proceeds thus: In the verse preceding my text, he states his proposition (though not for the first time), that "Jesus is the Son of God;" Then he adds —"This is he that came by water and blood, Jesus the Christ;—not by the water only, but by the water and the blood;" that is, this is he who in the fulness of the time is come, according to the early promise of his coming, Jesus, by water and blood proved to be the Christ, — not by the water only, but by the water and the blood. That this is the true exposition of the text,— that the coming by water and blood, as our public translation gives the passage, is coming with the evidence of the water and the blood, proving that he was the Christ, — appears from the distinct explication which immediately follows of the whole evidence, of which the water and the blood make principal parts. For thus the apostle proceeds: "And the spirit beareth witness (or more literally, the spirit is a thing witnessing), because the spirit is truth.". The word "spirit" signifies here, as in many other

places, the gift of tongues, and other extraordinary endowments, preternaturally conferred by the agency of the Spirit, not on the apostles only, but on believers in general in the apostolic age. When the word signifies the Divine person, the epithet Holy is usually joined with it. This spirit is a "thing witnessing," besides the water and the blood, because this "spirit is truth." It is the completion of a promise: These extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, consisting in an improvement of the faculties of the mind for the apprehension of divine truth, and in enlargements of its command over the bodily organs (as in the gift of tongues) for the propagation of it, were an evident completion of the promise given by our Lord to the apostles, expressly in the character of the son of God, that after his return to the Father he would send the Spirit to lead them into all truth. These gifts, therefore, the fulfilment of that promise, were the truth making good the words; which truth proved the sincerity and veracity of the giver of the promise, and established his pretensions. Thus, this spirit, because it was truth, was a thing

bearing witness together with the water and the blood.

The apostle goes on: "For there are three which bear record in heaven (*i. e.* there are three in heaven which bear record), — the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in the earth, — the spirit, and the water, and the blood; and these three agree in one."

I shall not enter into argument in defence of the verse containing the testimony of the Three in heaven. It has indeed of late years been brought under suspicion; and the authenticity of it has been given up by men of great learning and unquestioned piety; even among the orthodox. But I conceive that the exposition which I shall give of the entire passage will best vindicate the sincerity of the text as it stands, against the exceptions of an over-subtle criticism in these late ages, contradicting the explicit testimony of St. Jerome, that critical reviser of the Latin version in the fourth century, or, at the latest, in the very beginning of the

fifth, corroborated as it is by the citations of still earlier fathers.

"There are three," says the apostle (for these I assume as his genuine words), "There are three in heaven that bear record," — record to this fact, that Jesus is the Christ, — the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost." The Father bare witness by his own voice from heaven, twice declaring Jesus his beloved Son, — first, after his baptism, when he came up out of the river; and again at the transfiguration: A third time the Father bare witness, when he sent his angel to Jesus in agony in the garden. The Eternal Word bare witness, by the fulness of the Godhead dwelling in Jesus bodily, — by that plenitude of strength and power with which he was supplied for the performance of his miracles, and the endurance in his frail and mortal body of the fire of the Father's wrath: The Word bare witness, — perhaps more indirectly, — still the Word bare witness, by the preternatural darkness which for three hours obscured the sun, while Jesus hung in torment upon the cross, — in the quaking of the earth, the

rending of the rocks, and the opening of the graves, to liberate the bodies of the saints which appeared in the holy city after our Lord's resurrection: For these extraordinary convulsions of the material world must be ascribed to that power by which God in the beginning created it, and still directs the course of it,—that is, to the immediate act of the Word; for "by him all things were made, and he upholdeth all things by the Word of his own power." The Holy Ghost bare witness, by the acknowledgment of the infant Jesus, made, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, by the mouths of his servants and instruments Simeon and Anna; and more directly, by his visible descent upon the adult Jesus at his baptism, and upon the apostles of Jesus after the ascension of their Lord. Thus the Three in heaven bare witness; and these three, the apostle adds, *are* one,—one in the unity of a consentient testimony; for that unity is all that is requisite to the purpose of the apostle's present argument. It is remarkable, however, that he describes the unity of the testimony of the three celestial and the three terrestrial witnesses in different terms,

— I conceive for this reason, Of the latter more could not be said with truth than that they " *agree* in one;" for they are not one in nature and substance: But the Three in heaven being in substance and in nature one, he asserts the agreement of their testimony in terms which predicate their substantial unity, in which the consent of testimony is necessarily included; lest, if he applied no higher phrase to them than to the terrestrial witnesses, he might seem tacitly to qualify and lower his own doctrine. He goes on: " And there are three in earth that bear witness, — the spirit, and the water, and the blood; and these three agree in one."

Having thus detailed the particulars of the evidence, the apostle closes this part of his argument with these words: " This is the witness of God:" that is, this testimony, made up of six several parts, the witness of three witnesses in heaven, and the witness of three witnesses in earth, — this, taken altogether, is " the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son."

The spirit here, in the eighth verse, as well as in my text, is evidently to be understood of the gifts preternaturally conferred upon believers. But what is the water, and what is the blood, produced as two other terrestrial witnesses? what is their deposition, and what is its effect and amount?

No one who recollects the circumstances of the crucifixion, as they are detailed in St. John's Gospel, can for a moment entertain a doubt that the water and the blood mentioned here as witnesses, are the water and the blood which issued from the Redeemer's side, when his body, already dead, was pierced by a soldier with a spear. But how were these witnesses? and what did they attest? First, it is to be observed, that the stream, not of blood alone, but of water with the blood, was something preternatural and miraculous; for St. John dwells upon it with earnest reiterated asseveration, as a thing so wonderful that the explicit testimony of an eye-witness was requisite to make it credible; and yet of great importance to be accredited as a main

foundation of faith, "One of the soldiers," the evangelist saith, "with a spear pierced his side; and forthwith came there out blood and water. And he that saw it bear record; and his record is true; and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe." When a man accompanies the assertion of a fact with this declaration, that he was an eye-witness, that what he asserts he himself believes to be true, — that he was under no deception at the time, — that he not only believes but knows the fact to be true, from the certain information of his own senses, — that he is anxious for the sake of others that it should be believed, — he certainly speaks of something extraordinary and hard to be believed, and yet in his judgment of great importance. The piercing of our Saviour's side with a spear, and the not breaking of his legs, though that piece of cruelty was usually practised among the Romans in the execution of that horrible punishment which it was our Lord's lot to undergo, had been facts of great importance, though nothing had issued from the wound; because, as the evangelist observes, they were the completion of two very re-

markable prophecies concerning the Messiah's sufferings: But there was nothing in either, in the doing of the one or the not doing of the other, so much out of the common course as to be difficult of belief. The streaming of the blood from a wound in a body so lately dead that the blood might well be supposed to be yet fluid, would have been nothing remarkable. The extraordinary circumstance must have been the flowing of the water with the blood. Some men of learning have imagined that the water which issued in this instance with the blood was the fluid with which the heart in its natural situation in the human body is surrounded. This, chemists perhaps may class among the watery fluids; being neither viscous like an oil, nor inflammable like spirits, nor elastic or volatile like an air or ether: It differs, however, remarkably from plain water, as anatomists assert, in the colour and other qualities: And that this fluid should issue with the blood of the heart, when a sharp weapon had divided the membranes which enclose it, as the spear must have done before it reached the heart, had been nothing more

extraordinary than that blood by itself should have issued at a wound in any other part. Besides, in the detail of a fact narrated with so much earnestness to gain belief, the evangelist must be supposed to speak with the most scrupulous precision, and to call every thing by its name. The water, therefore, which he says he saw streaming from the wound, was as truly water as the blood was blood; the pure element of water, — transparent, colourless, insipid, inodorous water. And here is the miracle, that pure water, instead of the fluid of the pericardium in its natural state, should have issued with the blood from a wound in the region of the heart. This pure water and the blood coming forth together, are two of the three terrestrial witnesses whose testimony is so efficacious, in St. John's judgment, for the confirmation of our faith.

But how do this water and this blood bear witness that the crucified Jesus was the Christ? Water and blood were the indispensible instruments of cleansing and expiation in all the cleansings and expiations

of the law. "Almost all things," saith St. Paul, "are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood there is no remission." But the purgation was not by blood only, but by blood and water; for the same apostle says—"When Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and sprinkled both the book and all the people." All the cleansings and expiations of the law, by water and animal blood, were typical of the real cleansing of the conscience by the water of baptism, and of the expiation of real guilt by the blood of Christ shed upon the cross, and virtually taken and received by the faithful in the Lord's supper. The flowing therefore of this water and this blood, immediately upon our Lord's death, from the wound opened in his side, was a notification to the surrounding multitudes, though at the time understood by few, that the real expiation was now complete, and the cleansing fount set open.—O wonderful exhibition of the goodness and severity of God! It is the ninth hour, and Jesus, strong to the

last in suffering, commending his spirit to the Father, exclaims with a loud voice that "it is finished," bows his anointed head, and renders up the ghost! Nature is convulsed! earth trembles! the sanctuary, that type of the heaven of heavens, is suddenly and forcibly thrown open! the tombs are burst! Jesus hangs upon the cross a corpse! and lo the fountain, which, according to the prophet, was this day to be set open for sin and for pollution, is seen suddenly springing from his wound!—Who, contemplating only in imagination the mysterious awful scene, exclaims not with the centurion—"Truly this was the Son of God!"—truly he *was* the Christ!

Thus I have endeavoured to explain how the water and the blood, together with the spirit, are witnesses upon earth to establish the faith which overcometh the world. Much remains untouched; but the time forbids me to proceed. One thing only I must add,—that the faith which overcometh the world consists not in the involuntary assent of the mind to historical evidence; nor in its assent, perhaps still

more involuntary, to the conclusions of argument from facts proved and admitted. All this knowledge and all this understanding the devils possess, yet have not faith; and, believing without faith, they tremble. Faith is not merely a speculative but a practical acknowledgment of Jesus as the Christ,—an effort and motion of the mind toward God; when the sinner, convinced of sin, accepts with thankfulness the proffered terms of pardon, and in humble confidence applying individually to self the benefit of the general atonement, in the elevated language of a venerable father of the church, drinks of the stream which flows from the Redeemer's wounded side. The effect is, that in a little he is filled with that perfect love of God which casteth out fear,—he cleaves to God with the entire affection of the soul. And from this active lively faith, overcoming the world, subduing carnal self, all these good works do necessarily spring, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

SERMON X.

LUKE, iv. 18, 19.

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, — to set at liberty them that are bruised, — to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. *

IT was, as it should seem, upon our Saviour's first appearance in the synagogue at Nazareth, the residence of his family, in the character of a public teacher, that to the astonishment of that assembly, where he was known only as the carpenter's son, he applied to himself that remarkable

* Preached before the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, June 1. 1793.

passage of Isaiah which the evangelist recites in the words of my text. "This day," said our Lord, "is this scripture fulfilled in your ears." The phrase "this day" is not, I think, to be understood of that particular Sabbath-day upon which he undertook to expound this prophetic text to the men of Nazareth; nor "your ears," of the ears of the individual congregation assembled at the time within the walls of that particular synagogue. The expressions are to be taken according to the usual latitude of common speech,—"this day," for the whole time of our Lord's appearance in the flesh, or at least for the whole season of his public ministry; and "your ears," for the ears of "all you inhabitants of Judea and Galilee who now hear my doctrine and see my miracles." Our Lord affirms, that in his works and in his daily preaching, his countrymen might discern the full completion of this prophetic text; inasmuch as he was the person upon whom the Spirit of Jehovah was,—whom Jehovah had anointed "to preach the gospel to the poor,"—whom Jehovah had sent "to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance

to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, — to set at liberty them that are bruised, — and to preach the acceptable year of the Lord."

None but an inattentive reader of the Bible can suppose that these words were spoken by the prophet Isaiah of himself. Isaiah had a portion without doubt, but a portion only, of the Divine Spirit. In any sense in which the Spirit of Jehovah was upon the prophet, it was more eminently upon him who received it not by measure. The prophet Isaiah restored not, that we know, any blind man to his sight; he delivered no captive from his chain. He predicted indeed the restoration of the Jews from the Babylonian captivity, — their final restoration from their present dispersion, — and the restoration of man from the worse captivity of sin: But he never took upon him to proclaim the actual commencement of the season of liberation; which is the thing properly implied in the phrase of "preaching deliverance to the captives." To the brokenhearted he administered no other balm than the distant

hope of one who in future times should bear their sorrows; nor were the poor of his own time particularly interested in his preaching. The characters, therefore, which the speaker seems to assume in this prophetic text, are of two kinds, — such as are in no sense answered by any known circumstance in the life and character of Isaiah, or of any other personage of the ancient Jewish history, but in every sense, literal and figurative, of which the terms are capable, apply to Christ; and such as might in some degree be answered in the prophet's character, but not otherwise than as his office bore a subordinate relation to Christ's office, and his predictions to Christ's preaching. It is a thing well known to all who have been conversant in Isaiah's writings, that many of his prophecies are conceived in the form of dramatic dialogues, in which the usual persons of the sacred piece are God the Father, the Messiah, the prophet himself, and a chorus of the faithful: But it is left to the reader to discover, by the matter spoken, how many of these speakers are introduced, and to which speaker each

part of the discourse belongs. It had been reasonable therefore to suppose, that this, like many other passages, is delivered in the person of the Messiah, had our Lord's authority been wanting for the application of the prophecy to himself. Following the express authority of our Lord, in the application of this prophecy to him, we might have spared the use of any other argument, were it not that a new form of infidelity of late hath reared its hideous head; which, carrying on an impious opposition to the genuine faith, under the pretence of reformation, in its affected zeal to purge the Christian doctrine of I know not what corruptions, and to restore our creed to what it holds forth as the primitive standard,—under that infatuation which by the just judgment of God ever clings to self-sufficient folly, pretends to have discovered inaccuracies in our Lord's *own* doctrine; and scruples not to pronounce him not merely a man, but a man peccable and fallible in that degree as to have misquoted and misapplied the prophecies of the Old Testament. In this instance our great Lord and Master defies the profane cen-

sures of the doctors of that impious school. This text, referred to its original place in the book of Isaiah, is evidently the opening of a prophetic dialogue; and in the particulars of the character described in it, it carries its own internal evidence of its necessary reference to our Lord, and justifies his application of it to himself;—as will farther appear, from a more particular exposition.

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me," or "over me." The expression implies a superiority and control of the Divine Spirit,—the Spirit's government and guidance of the man, and the man's entire submission, in the prosecution of the work he had in hand, to the Spirit's direction.

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me." Under the law, the three great offices of prophet, priest, and king, were conferred by the ceremony of anointing the person. The unction of our Lord was the descent of the Holy Ghost upon him at his baptism. This was analogous to the ceremony of

anointing, as it was a mark publicly exhibited, " that God had anointed him," to use St. Peter's expression, " with the Holy Ghost and with power."

It will seem nothing strange that Jesus, who was himself God, should derive authority from the unction of that Spirit which upon other occasions he is said to give, and that he should be under the Spirit's direction,—if it be remembered, that our Lord was as truly man as he was truly God,—that neither of the two natures was absorbed in the other, but both remained in themselves perfect, notwithstanding the union of the two in one person. The Divine Word, to which the humanity was united, was not, as some ancient heretics imagined, instead of a soul to inform the body of the man; for this could not have been, without a diminution of the divinity, which upon this supposition must have become obnoxious to all the perturbations of the human soul,—to the passions of grief, fear, anger, pity, joy, hope, and disappointment,—to all which our Lord, without sin, was liable. The human nature in our Lord

was complete in both its parts, consisting of a body and a rational soul. The rational soul of our Lord's human nature was a distinct thing from the principle of divinity to which it was united; and being so distinct, like the souls of other men, it owed the right use of its faculties, in the exercise of them upon religious subjects, and its uncorrupted rectitude of will, to the influence of the Holy Spirit of God. Jesus indeed "was anointed with this holy oil above his fellows;" inasmuch as the intercourse was uninterrupted, the illumination by infinite degrees more full, and the consent and submission on the part of the man more perfect, than in any of the sons of Adam; insomuch that he alone, of all the human race, by the strength and light imparted from above, was exempt from sin, and rendered superior to temptation. To him the Spirit was given not by measure. The unmeasured infusion of the Spirit into the Redeemer's soul was not the means but the effect of its union to the second person of the Godhead. An union, of which this had been the means had differed only in degree from that which is in some degree

the privilege of every true believer,—which in an eminent degree was the privilege of the apostles, who, by the visible descent of the Holy Ghost upon them on the day of Pentecost, were in some sort, like their Lord, anointed with the unction from on high. But in him the natures were united; and the uninterrupted perfect commerce of his human soul with the Divine Spirit was the effect and the privilege of that mysterious conjunction.

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel."—*To preach the gospel.* The original word which is expressed in our English Bibles by the word "gospel," signifies *good news*, a joyful message, or glad tidings; and our English word "gospel," traced to its original in the Teutonic language, is found to carry precisely the same import,—being a compound of two words, an adjective signifying *good*, and a substantive which signifies a *tale, message*, or *declaration*. But as this signification of the English word, by the general neglect of the parent language, is pretty much forgotten, or

remembered only among the learned, it may give perspicuity to the text if for the single word "gospel" we substitute the two words "glad tidings." "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach glad tidings to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, —to set at liberty them that are bruised,— to preach the acceptable year of the Lord."

Our blessed Lord, in the course of his ministry, restored the sight of the corporeal eye to many who were literally blind. By his miraculous assistance in various instances of worldly affliction, far beyond the reach of any human aid, he literally healed the broken heart; as in the instance of Jairus, whose breathless daughter he revived —of the widow of Nain, whose son he restored to her from the coffin — of the family of Lazarus, whom he raised from the grave — of the Syrophœnician woman, whose young daughter he rescued from possession — and of many other sufferers, whose several cases time would fail me to

recount. We read not, however, that during his life on earth he literally opened the doors of any earthly prison for the enlargement of the captive, or that in any instance he literally released the slave or the convict from the burden of the galling chain. It is probable, therefore, that all these expressions, of "the poor, the brokenhearted, the captive, the blind, and the bruised," carry something of a mystic meaning, denoting moral disorders and deficiencies under the image of natural calamities and imperfections; and that the various benefits of redemption are described under the notion of remedies applied to those natural afflictions and distempers. In this figurative sense, the poor are not those who are destitute of this world's riches; but those who before our Lord's appearance in the flesh were poor in religious treasure, without any clear knowledge of the true God, of their own duty here, and of their hope hereafter, — the whole heathen world, destitute of the light of revelation. To them our Lord preached the glad tidings of life and immortality. The brokenhearted are sinners, not hardened in their sins, but desponding under

a sense of guilt, without a hope of expiation. These broken hearts the Redeemer healed, by making the atonement, and by declaring the means and the terms of reconciliation. The captives are they who were in bondage to the law of sin, domineering in their members, and overpowering the will of the conscience and the rational faculty. The blind are the devout but erring Jews of our Lord's days, blind to the spiritual sense of the symbols of their ritual law. The bruised are the same Jews, bruised in their consciences by the galling fetters of a religion of external ordinances, whom our Lord released by the promulgation of his perfect law of liberty. But notwithstanding that the expressions in my text may easily bear, and in the intention of the inspiring Spirit, certainly, I think, involved this mystic meaning, yet since the prophecy, in some of these particulars, had a literal accomplishment in our Lord's miracles, the literal meaning is by no means to be excluded. Indeed, when of both meanings of a prophet's phrase, the literal and the figurative, either seems clearly and equally admissible, the true rule of interpretation seems to be,

that the phrase is to be understood in both. This seems a clear conclusion from the very nature of our Lord's miracles, which, for the most part, were actions distinctly symbolical of one or other of the spiritual benefits of the redemption. As such, they were literal completions of the prophecies; taking the place, as it were, of the prophecies so completed; pointing to another latent meaning, and to a higher completion; and thus forming a strict and wonderful union between the letter and the spirit of the prophetic language.

This text is not the only passage in the prophetic writings in which the preaching of glad tidings to the poor is mentioned as a principal branch of the Messiah's office. That in the exposition of these prophecies the figurative sense of the expression is not to exclude the literal, is evident from this consideration, that the discoveries of the Christian revelation are in fact emphatically glad tidings to the poor, in the literal acceptation of the word, — to those who are destitute of worldly riches. To those who, from their present condition, might be

likely to think themselves forsaken of their Maker — to doubt whether they existed for any other purpose than to minister to the superfluous enjoyments of the higher ranks of society, by the severity of their own toil, — to persons in this low condition, and under these gloomy apprehensions, was it not glad tidings to be told that they had a hope, beyond the infidel's expectation, of a perpetual cessation of sorrow in the grave? hope of a day when all shall rise to meet before the common Lord, high and low, rich and poor, one with another! — when, without regard to the distinctions of this transitory life, each man shall receive his proper portion of honour or shame, enjoyment or misery, according to the degree of his moral and religious worth! — that he whose humble station excluded him, in this life, from the society and the pleasures of the great (now fallen from their greatness), shall become the companion and the fellow of angels and of glorified saints! shall stand for ever in the presence of his Redeemer and his God, and partake of the pleasures which are at God's right hand!

Again, the discoveries of Christianity were made in a manner the most suited to popular apprehension; and, for that reason, they were emphatically glad tidings to the poor. Its duties are not delivered in a system built on abstract notions of the eternal fitness of things — of the useful and the fair, — notions not void of truth, but intelligible only to minds highly improved by long habits of study and reflection. In the gospel, the duties of man are laid down in short, perspicuous, comprehensive precepts, delivered as the commands of God, under the awful sanctions of eternal rewards and punishments. The doctrines of the Christian revelation are not encumbered with a long train of argumentative proof; which is apt to bewilder the vulgar, no less than it gratifies the learned: They are propounded to the faith of all, upon the authority of a teacher who came down from heaven, "to speak what he knew, and testify what he had seen."

Again, the poor are they on whom the Christian doctrine would most readily take effect. Christ's atonement, it is true, hath

been made for all. The benefits of redemption are no less common to all ranks of society than to all nations of the world; and upon this ground, the first news of the Saviour's birth was justly called, by the angels who proclaimed it, "glad tidings of great joy which should be to all people." Every situation of life hath its proper temptations and its proper duties; and with the aids which the gospel offers, the temptations of all situations are equally surmountable, and the duties equally within the power of the believer's improved strength. It were a derogation from the greatness of our Lord's work, to suppose, that with an equal strength of religious principle once formed, the attainment of salvation should be more precarious in any one rank of life than in another. But if we consider the different ranks of men, not as equally religious, but as equally without religion (which was the deplorable situation of the world when Christianity made its first appearance), the poor were the class of men among whom the new doctrine was likely to be, and actually was, in the first instance, the most efficacious. The riches of the world, and the

gratifications they afford, are too apt, when their evil tendency is not opposed by a principle of religion, to beget that friendship for the world which is enmity with God. The poor, on the other hand, excluded from the hope of worldly pleasure, were likely to listen with the more attention to the promise of a distant happiness; and, exposed to much actual suffering here, they would naturally be the most alarmed with the apprehension of continued and increased suffering in another world. For this third reason, the gospel, upon its first publication, was emphatically "glad tidings to the poor."

From these three considerations, that the gospel, in the matter, in the manner of the discovery, and in its relation to the state of mankind at the time of its publication, was in fact in a peculiar sense "glad tidings to the poor," the conclusion seems just and inevitable, that, in my text, and in other passages of a like purport, the prophets describe the poor, in the literal acceptation of the word, as especial objects of the Divine mercy in the Christian dispensation.

[illegible] which [illegible] been raised against [illegible] institutions, by a mean and [illegible] policy [illegible] in foreign climes, [illegible] inconsistent with the genuine feelings of the home-bred [illegible]—a policy which portends to fore-[illegible] that by the advantages of a religious [illegible], the poor may be raised above the [illegible] of his station, and his [illegible] life [illegible]. Our Lord and his [illegible] better understood the interests of [illegible] and were more tender of its security [illegible] than many, perhaps, of our [illegible]. Our Lord and his [illegible] certainly never saw this danger, [illegible] the improvement of the poor in religious knowledge might be a means of confounding civil subordination. They were [illegible] apprehensive that the poor would be made the worse servants by an education which should teach them to serve their masters [illegible] from a principle of duty to the [illegible] Master of the whole family in heaven. These mean suggestions of a wicked policy [illegible] contradicted by the experience of [illegible]. The extreme condition of oppression and debasement—the unnatural

condition of slavery, produced, in ancient times, its poets, philosophers, and moralists. Imagine not that I would teach you to infer that the condition of slavery is not adverse to the improvement of the human character: Its natural tendency is certainly to fetter the genius and debase the heart: But some brave spirits, of uncommon strength, have at different times surmounted the disadvantages of that dismal situation; and the fact which I would offer to your attention is this, — that these men, eminent in taste and literature, were not rendered by those accomplishments the less profitable slaves. Where, then, is the danger, that the free-born poor of this country should be the worse hired servants, for a proficiency in a knowledge by which both master and servant are taught their respective duties, by which alone either rich or poor may be made wise unto salvation?

Much serious consideration would indeed be due to the objection, were it the object, or the ordinary and probable effect of these charitable seminaries for the maintenance

and education of the infant poor, to qualify them for the occupations and pursuits of the higher ranks of society, or to give them a relish for their pleasures and amusements. But this is not the case. Nothing more is attempted, nor can more indeed be done, than to give them that instruction in the doctrines and duties of religion to which a claim of common right is in some sort constituted in a Christian country, by the mere capacity to profit by it; and to furnish them with those first rudiments of what may be called the trivial literature of their mother tongue, without which they would scarce be qualified to be subjects even of the lowest class of the free government under which they are born,—a government in which the meanest citizen—the very mendicant at your doors, unless his life or his franchises have been forfeited by crime to public justice, hath his birth-rights, and is intrusted with a considerable share of the management of himself. It is the peculiarity,—and this peculiarity is the principal excellence of such governments,—that as the great have no property in the labour

of the poor, other than what is acquired for a time by a mutual agreement, the poor man, on the other hand, hath no claim upon his superior for support and maintenance, except under some particular covenant, — as an apprentice, a journeyman, a menial servant, or a labourer, — which entitles him to the recompense of his stipulated service, and to nothing else. It follows, that, in such states, every man is to derive a support for himself and his family from the voluntary exertions of his own industry, under the direction of his own genius, his own prudence, and his own conscience. Hence, in these free governments, some considerable improvement of the understanding is necessary even for the lowest orders of the people; and much strength of religious principle is requisite to govern the individual, in those common concerns of his private life in which the laws leave the meanest subject, equally with his betters, master of himself. Despotism — sincere, unalloyed, rigid despotism, is the only form of government which may with safety to itself neglect the education of its infant poor. Where it is the principle of govern-

ment that the common people are to be ruled as mere animals, it might indeed be impolitic to suffer them to acquire the moral discernment and the spontaneity of man: But in free states, whether monarchical, or of whatever form, the case is exactly the reverse. The schemes of Providence and Nature are too deeply laid to be overthrown by man's impolicy. It is contrary to the order of Nature, it is repugnant to the decrees of Providence,— and therefore the thing shall never be,— that civil liberty should long maintain its ground among any people disqualified by ignorance and profligacy for the use and enjoyment of it. Hence the greatest danger threatens every free constitution, when, by a neglect of a due culture of the infant mind, barbarism and irreligion are suffered to overrun the lower orders. The barriers which civilized manners naturally oppose against the encroachments of power, on the one hand, and the exorbitance of licentiousness, on the other, will soon be borne down; and the government will degenerate either into an absolute despotic monarchy, or, what a subsisting example proves to be

by infinite degrees a heavier curse, the capricious domination of an unprincipled rabble. Thus would ignorance and irreligion, were they once to prevail generally in the lower ranks of society, necessarily terminate in one or the other of these two dreadful evils, — the dissolution of all government, or the enslaving of the majority of mankind: while true religion, on the contrary, is the best support of every government, which, being founded on just principles, proposes for its end the joint advancement of the virtue and the happiness of the people; and by necessary consequence co-operates with religion in the two great purposes of exalting the general character and of bettering the general condition of man. Of every such government, Christianity, by consent and concurrence in a common end, is the natural friend and ally; at the same time that, by its silent influence on the hearts of men, it affords the best security for the permanence of that degree of orderly definite liberty which is an essential principle in every such constitution. The Christian religion fosters and protects such

liberty, — not by supporting the absurd and pernicious doctrine of the natural equality of men, — not by asserting that sovereignty is originally in the multitude, and that kings are the servants of their people, — not by releasing the conscience of the subject from the obligations of loyalty, in every supposed case of the sovereign's misconduct, and maintaining what in the new vocabulary of modern democracy is named *the sacred right of insurrection*: not by all, or by any of these detestable maxims, Christianity supports that rational liberty which she approves and cherishes; but by planting in the breast of the individual powerful principles of self-government, which render greater degrees of civil freedom consistent with the public safety.

The patrons, therefore, of these beneficent institutions, in which the children of the poor are trained in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, have no reason to apprehend that true policy will disapprove the pious work which charity hath suggested. Thousands of children of both

sexes, annually rescued by means of these charitable seminaries, in various parts of the kingdom, from beggary, ignorance, and vice, are gained as useful citizens to the state, at the same time that they are preserved as sheep of Christ's fold. Fear not, therefore, to indulge the feelings of benevolence and charity which this day's spectacle awakens in your bosoms.

It is no weakness to sympathize in the real hardships of the inferior orders: it is no weakness to be touched with an anxiety for their welfare, — to feel a complacency and holy joy in the reflection, that, by the well-directed exertions of a godly charity, their interests secular and eternal are secured: it is no weakness to rejoice, that, without breaking the order of society, religion can relieve the condition of poverty from the greatest of its evils, from ignorance and vice: it is no weakness to be liberal of your wordly treasures in contribution to so good a purpose. The angels in heaven participate these holy feelings. Our Father which is in heaven accepts and will reward the work, provided it be well done, in the

true spirit of faith and charity; for of such as these—as these who stand before you, arrayed in the simplicity and innocence of childhood, in the humility of poverty,—of such as these, it was our Lord's express and solemn declaration, "of such is the kingdom of God!"

SERMON XI.

MARK, vii. 37.

And they were beyond measure astonished, saying, He hath done all things well; he maketh both the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak. *

IT is matter of much curiosity, and affording no small edification, if the speculation be properly pursued, to observe the very different manner in which the various spectators of our Lord's miracles were affected by what they saw, according to their different dispositions.

We read in St. Luke, that our Lord "was casting out a devil, and it was dumb; and it came to pass, that when the devil

* Preached for the Deaf and Dumb Asylum, 1796.

was gone out the dumb spake;" and the populace that were witnesses of the miracle "wondered:" they *wondered*, and there was an end of their speculations upon the business: they made no farther inquiry; and their thoughts led them to no farther conclusion than that the thing was very strange. These seem to have been people of that stupid sort which abounds too much in all ranks of society, whose notice is attracted by things that come to pass, not according to the difficulty of accounting for them,—a concern which never breaks their slumbers,—but according as they are more or less frequent. They are neither excited, by any scientific curiosity, to inquire after the established causes of the most common things, nor, by any pious regard to God's providential government of the world, to inquire after him in the most uncommon. Day and night succeed each other in constant vicissitude; the seasons hold their unvaried course; the sun makes his annual journey through the same regions of the sky; the moon runs the circle of her monthly changes, with a motion ever varying, yet subject to one

constant law and limit of its variations; the tides of the ocean ebb and flow; heavy waters are suspended at a great height in the thinner fluid of the air,—they are collected in clouds, which overspread the summer's sky, and descend in showers to refresh the verdure of the earth,—or they are driven by strong gales to the bleak regions of the North, whence the wintry winds return them to these milder climates, to fall lightly upon the tender blade in flakes of snow, and form a mantle to shelter the hope of the husbandman from the nipping frost. These things are hardly noticed by the sort of people who are now before us: they excite not even their wonder, though in themselves most wonderful; much less do they awaken them to inquire by what mechanism of the universe a system so complex in its motions and vicissitudes, and yet so regular and orderly in its complications, is carried on. They say to themselves — "These are the common occurrences of nature;" and they are satisfied. These same sort of people, if they see a blind man restored to sight, or the deaf and dumb suddenly endued, with-

out the use of physical means, with the faculties of hearing and of speech, wonder, — *i. e.* they say to themselves — " It is uncommon ;" and they concern themselves no farther. These people discover God neither in the still voice of Nature nor in the sudden blaze of miracle. They seem hardly to come within that definition of man which was given by some of the ancient philosophers, — that he is an animal which contemplates the objects of its senses. They contemplate nothing: two sentences, " It is very common," or " It is very strange," make at once the sum and the detail of their philosophy and of their belief, and are to them a solution of all difficulties. They wonder for a while; but they presently dismiss the subject of their wonder from their thoughts. Wonder, connected with a principle of rational curiosity, is the source of all knowledge and discovery, — and it is a principle even of piety; but wonder which ends in wonder, and is satisfied with wondering, is the quality of an idiot.

This stupidity, so common in all ranks

of men, — for what I now describe is no peculiarity of those who are ordinarily called the vulgar and illiterate, — this stupidity is not natural to man: it is the effect of an over-solicitude about the low concerns of the present world, which alienates the mind from objects most worthy its attention, and keeps its noble faculties employed on things of an inferior sort, drawing them aside from all inquiries, except what may be the speediest means to increase a man's wealth and advance his wordly interests.

When the stupidity arising from this attachment to the world is connected, as sometimes it is, with a principle of positive infidelity, or, which is much the same thing, with an entire negligence and practical forgetfulness of God, it makes the man a perfect savage. When this is not the case, — when this stupid indifference to the causes of the ordinary and extraordinary occurrences of the world, and something of a general belief in God's providence, meet, as they often do, in the same character, it is a circumstance of great danger to the

man's spiritual state, because it exp
to be the easy prey of every impost
religion of such persons has alway
tendency towards superstition; for
uninquisitive temper keeps them i
ignorance about secondary causes,
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nature,—that is, which is out of th
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effect of wonder, if it rested on th
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dreaded the conclusions to which in

this case might lead. They would not, therefore, trust these people, as perhaps they might have done with perfect security, to their own stupidity; but they suggested a principle to stop inquiry. They told the people that our Lord cast out devils by the aid and assistance of Beelzebub the prince of the devils. This extraordinary suggestion of the Pharisees will come under consideration in its proper place.

We read again, in St. Matthew, that our Lord, upon another occasion, restored a dumb dæmoniac to his speech; and the multitude assembled upon this occasion marvelled, saying — "It was never so seen in Israel." These people came some small matter nearer to the ancient definition of man than the wondering blockheads in St. Luke who had been spectators of the former miracle. They not only wondered, but they bestowed some thought upon the subject of their wonder; and in their reasonings upon it they went some little way. They recollected the miracles recorded in their sacred books of Moses and some of the ancient prophets: They compared this per-

Lord healed him, " insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw." The populace, upon this occasion, were amazed. But they were not only amazed, — they said not only that it never was so seen in Israel, — but they went much farther; they said — " Is not this the son of David?" Of these people, we may assert that they were not far from the kingdom of God. They looked for the redemption of Israel by a son of David: They believed therefore in God's promises by his prophets; and they entertained a suspicion, though it appears not that they went farther, that this might probably be the expected son of David. The alarm of the Pharisees was increased; and they had recourse to their former suggestion.

The manner in which these people treated the miracles which were done under their eyes comes now under consideration.

They were impressed with wonder, it seems, no less than the common people; but their wonder was connected with the pretence at least of philosophical disquisi-

tion upon the phænomena which excited it. They admitted that the things done, in every one of these instances, were beyond the natural powers of man, and must be referred to the extraordinary agency of some superior being; but they contended that there was no necessity to recur to an immediate exertion of God's own power, — that the power of the chief of the rebellious spirits was adequate to the effect.

This suggestion of the Pharisees proceeded upon an assumption, which, considered generally and in the abstract, without an application to any specific case, cannot be denied: They supposed that beings superior to man, but still created beings, whose powers fell short of the Divine, might possess that degree of power over many parts of the universe which might be adequate to effects quite out of the common course of nature; and that, by a familiarity with some of these superior beings, a man might perform miracles.

Some of the philosophizing divines of later times, who, under the mask of zeal

for religion, have done it more disservice than its open enemies, — some of these, anxious, as they would pretend, for the credit of our Lord's miracles, and for the general evidence of miracles, have gone the length of an absolute denial of these principles; and have ventured to assert that nothing preternatural can happen in the world but by an immediate act of God's own power. The assertion in itself is absurd, and in its consequences dangerous; and nothing is to be found in reason or in Scripture for its support, — much for its confutation. Analogy is the only ground upon which reason, in this question, can proceed; and analogy decides for the truth of the general principle of the Pharisees. Not, certainly, in their application of it to the specific case of our Lord's miracles, — but for the truth of their general principle, that subordinate beings may be the immediate agents in many preternatural effects, analogy is clearly on their side. It is a matter of fact and daily experience, that mere man, in addition to the natural dominion of the mind of every individual over the body which he animates, has acquired

an empire of no small extent over the matter of the external world. By optical machines, we can look into the celestial bodies with more accuracy and precision than with the naked eye we can look from an eminence into a city at the distance of a few miles; we can form a judgment of the materials of which they are composed; we can measure their distances; we can assign the quantity of matter they severally contain — the density of the matter of which they are made; we can estimate their mechanical powers: We know the weight of a given quantity of matter on the surface of the sun as well as we know its weight upon the surface of the earth: We can break the compound light of day into the constituent parts of which it is composed. But this is not all: Our acquired power goes to practical effects. We press the elements into our service, and can direct the general principles of the mechanism of the universe to the purposes of man: We can employ the buoyancy of the waters and the power of the winds to navigate vast unwieldy vessels to the remotest regions of the globe, for the purposes of commerce or of war; and we animate an iron pin, turn-

ing on a pivot, to direct the course of the mariner to his destined port: We can kindle a fire by the rays of the sun, collected in the focus of a burning-glass, and produce a heat which subdues that stubborn metal which defies the chemist's furnace: We can avert the stroke of lightning from our buildings. These are obvious instances of man's acquired power over the natural elements, — a power which produces effects which might seem preternatural to those who have no knowledge of the means. And shall we say that beings superior to man may not have powers of a more considerable extent, which they may exercise in a more summary way, — which produce effects far more wonderful, such as shall be truly miraculous with respect to our conceptions, who have no knowledge of their means.

Then, for Scripture, it is very explicit in asserting the existence of an order of beings far superior to man; and it gives something more than obscure intimations, that the holy angels are employed upon extraordinary occasions in the affairs of men, and the management of this sublunary world.

But the Pharisees went farther: Their argument supposed that even the apostate spirits have powers adequate to the production of preternatural effects. And with respect to this general principle, there is nothing either in reason or Scripture to confute it.

Reason must again recur to analogy. And we find not that the powers which men exercise over the natural elements are at all proportioned to the different degrees of their moral goodness or their religious attainments. The stoic and the libertine, the sinner and the saint, are equally adroit in the application of the telescope and the quadrant,—in the use of the compass,—in the management of the sail, the rudder, and the oar,—and in the exercise of the electrical machine. Since, then, in our own order of being, the power of the individual over external bodies is not at all proportioned to his piety or his morals, but is exercised indiscriminately and in equal degrees by the good and by the bad, we have no reason from analogy to suppose but that the like indiscrimination may ob-

tain in higher orders, and that both the good and evil angels may exercise powers far transcending any we possess, the effects of which to us will seem preternatural: For there is nothing in this to disturb the established order of things; since these powers are, no less than our own, subject to the sovereign control of God, who makes the actions of evil angels, as of bad men, subservient to the accomplishment of his own will, and will not suffer the effects of them finally to thwart his general schemes of mercy.

The Scriptures, again, confirm the principle. We read, in the book of Exodus, of an express trial of skill, if we may be allowed the expression, between Moses and the magicians of Egypt, in the exercise of miraculous powers; in which the magicians were completely foiled,—not because their feats were not miraculous, but because their power, as they were at last driven to confess, extended not to those things which Moses did. They performed some miracles; but Moses performed many more, and much greater.

When the wands of the magicians were cast upon the ground and became serpents, the fact, considered in itself, was as much a miracle as when Aaron's rod was cast upon the ground and became a serpent; for it was as much a miracle that one dry stick should become a live serpent as another. When the magicians turned the water into blood, we must confess it was miraculous, or we must deny that it was a miracle when Aaron turned the water into blood. When the frogs left their marshy bed to croak in the chambers of the king, it was a miracle, whether the frogs came up at the call of Moses and Aaron or of Jannes and Jambres. And the sacred history gives not the least intimation of any imposture in these performances of the magicians: It only exhibits the circumstances in which Moses's miracles exceeded those of the magicians; and marks the point where the power of the magicians, by their own confession, stopped, when Moses's went on, as it should seem, without limits. Now, whoever will allow that these things done by the magicians were miraculous,—*i. e.* beyond the natural

powers of man, — must allow that they were done by some familiarity of these magicians with the Devil: For they were done in express defiance of God's power; they were done to discredit his messenger, and to encourage the King of Egypt to disregard the message.

It was not, therefore, in the general principle, that miracles may be wrought by the aid of evil spirits, that the weakness lay of the objection made by the Pharisees to our Lord's miracles, as evidence of his mission. Our Lord himself called not this general principle in question, any more than the writers of the Old Testament call in question the reality of the miracles of the Egyptian magicians. But the folly of their objection lay in their application of it to the specific instance of our Lord's miracles; which, as he replied to them at the time, were works no less diametrically opposite to the Devil's purposes and the interests of his kingdom, than the feats of Pharaoh's magicians, or any other wonders that have at any time been exhibited by wicked men in compact with the Devil,

have been in opposition to God. Our Lord's miracles, in the immediate effects of the individual acts, were works of charity: They were works which, in the immediate effect of the individual acts, rescued the bodies of miserable men from that tyranny which before the coming of our Lord the Devil had been permitted to exercise over them; and the general end and intention of them all was the utter demolition of the Devil's kingdom, and the establishment of the kingdom of God upon its ruins. And to suppose that the Devil lent his own power for the furtherance of this work, was, as our Lord justly argued, to suppose that the Devil was waging war upon himself.

There is, however, another principle upon which the truth of our Lord's miracles, as evidence of his mission from the Father, may be argued,—a principle which applies to our Lord's miracles exclusively, and gives them a degree of credit beyond any miracles except his own and those which after his ascension were performed by his disciples in his name, in the primi-

tive ages. To this principle we are led, by considering the manner in which the particular miracle to which my text relates affected the spectators of it; who seem to have been persons of a very different complexion from any that have yet come before us.

"They were beyond measure astonished;"—so we read in our English Bibles; but the better rendering of the Greek words of the evangelist would be—"They were superabundantly astonished, saying, He hath done all things well; he maketh both the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak."

They were superabundantly astonished: Not that their astonishment was out of proportion to the extraordinary nature of the thing they had seen, as if the thing was less extraordinary than they thought it; but their astonishment was justly carried to a height which no astonishment could exceed. This is that superabundant astonishment which the evangelist describes, not taxing it with extravagance. It was

not the astonishment of ignorance: It was an astonishment upon principle and upon knowledge. It was not the astonishment of those who saw a thing done which they thought utterly unaccountable. They knew how to account for it: They knew that the finger of God himself was the efficient cause of what they saw; and to that cause they without hesitation, yet not hastily and in surprise, but upon the most solid principles of belief, referred it. It was not the astonishment of those who see a thing done which they thought would never come to pass: It was the astonishment of those who find a hope which they had entertained of something very extraordinary to be done satisfied in a degree equal to or beyond their utmost expectations: It was the astonishment of those who saw an extraordinary thing, which they expected to take place some time or other, but knew not exactly when, accomplished in their own times, and under their own inspection: It was that sort of astonishment which any of us, who firmly expect the second coming of our Lord, but knowing not the times and the seasons, which the Father hath

put in his own power, look not for it at any definite time, — it was that sort of astonishment which we should feel if we saw the sign of the Son of Man this moment displayed in the heavens: For observe the remark of these people upon the miracle,—" He hath done all things well; he maketh both the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak." To have done a thing well, is a sort of commendation which we bestow, not upon a man that performs some extraordinary feat, which we had no reason to expect from him, but upon a man who executes that which by his calling and profession it is his proper task to do, in the manner that we have a right to expect and demand of him who pretends and professes to be a master in that particular business. This is the praise which these people bestowed upon our Lord's performances. " He hath done all things well;"— he hath done every thing in the most perfect manner which we had a right to expect that *he* should do who should come to us assuming the character of our Messiah.

The ancient prophecies had described all the circumstances of our Saviour's birth, life, and death; and, with other circumstances, had distinctly specified the sort of miracles which he should perform. This is the circumstance which, I say, is peculiar to our Lord's miracles, and puts the evidence of them beyond all doubt, and supersedes the necessity of all disputation concerning the general evidence of miracles. Our Lord, and of all persons who have ever appeared in the world, pretending to work miracles, or really working miracles in proof of a divine mission, our Lord alone, could appeal to a body of recorded prophecy, delivered many hundred years before he came into the world, and say — "In these ancient oracles it is predicted that the Messiah, appearing among you at a time defined by certain signs and characters, shall be known by his performing — not miracles generally — *but such and such specific miracles.* At a time distinguished by those signs and characters, *I* come; those specific works *I* do; and *I* exhibit the character of the Messiah, delineated in those prophecies, in all its circumstances."

It is remarkable, that our Lord, in reply to the Pharisees, condescended not to resort to this summary and overbearing proof. But he answered their objection by an argument, just indeed, and irresistibly conclusive, but of more refinement. This, I conceive, was in resentment of the insincerity of these uncandid adversaries. It is indisputable, from many circumstances in the gospel history, that the Pharisees knew our Lord to be the Messiah; and yet they were carried by motives of worldly interest to disown him, — just as Judas knew him to be the Messiah, and yet he was carried by motives of worldly interest to betray him. Thus, disowning the Messiah, whom they knew, they were deliberate apostates from their God; and they were treated as they deserved, when our Lord rather exposed the futility of their own arguments against him, than vouchsafed to offer that sort of evidence, which, to any that were not obstinate in wilful error, must have been irresistible, and which had indeed to the godly multitude offered itself. But when John the Baptist sent his disciples to inquire of Jesus if he was the person who was to come, or

whether they were to look for another (they were sent, you will observe, for their own conviction, — not for John's satisfaction; for he at this time could have no doubt), our Lord was pleased to deal with them in a very different manner: He made them eye-witnesses of many of those miracles which were a literal completion of the prophecies; and bade them go back and tell John what they had heard and seen. "Go and tell your master that you have seen *me* restore the paralytic; you have seen *me* cleanse the leper, cure the lame, the blind, the deaf, and the dumb; you have seen *me* liberate the possessed; you have seen *me* raise the dead; and you have heard *me* preach the gospel to the poor. He will connect these things with the prophecies that have gone before concerning *me*: — He will tell you what conclusion you must draw, and set before you the danger which threatens those who are scandalized in me."

I must now turn from this general subject, nor farther pursue the interesting meditations which it might suggest, in order

to apply the whole to the particular occasion which has brought me hither.

You will recollect, that the miracles which are specified in the prophecies as works that should characterize the Messiah when he should appear, were, in great part, the cure of diseases by natural means the most difficult of cure, and the relief of natural imperfections and inabilities. In such works our Lord himself delighted; and the miraculous powers, so long as they subsisted in the church, were exercised by the first disciples chiefly in acts of mercy of the same kind. Now that the miraculous powers are withdrawn, we act in conformity to the spirit of our holy religion, and to our Lord's own example, when we endeavour what we can to extend relief, by such natural means as are within our power, to the like instances of distress. It was prophesied of our Lord, that when he should come to save those that were of a fearful heart, "the eyes of the blind should be opened, and the ears of the deaf should be unstopped; that the lame man should leap as the hart, and the tongue of the dumb should sing." All

this, and much more, he verified. Of all natural imperfections, the want of speech and hearing seem the most deplorable, as they are those which most exclude the unhappy sufferer from society, — from all the enjoyments of the present world, and, it is to be feared, from a right apprehension of his interests in the next. The cure of the deaf and the dumb is particularly mentioned in the prophecies, among the works of mercy the most characteristic of man's great deliverer: And accordingly, when he came, there was, *I think*, no one species of miracle which he so frequently performed; which may justify an attention even of preference in us to this calamity.

It is now some years since a method has been found out, and practised with considerable success, of teaching persons deaf and dumb from the birth to speak: But it was not till the institution of this Asylum, in the year 1792, that the benefit of this discovery was extended in any degree to the poor; the great attention, skill, and trouble, requisite in the practice, putting the expense of cure far beyond the reach of the indigent,

and even of persons of a middling condition. The Directors of this charity, who are likely, from their opportunities, to have accurate information upon the subject, apprehend that the number of persons in this lamentable state is much greater than might be imagined.

In this Asylum, as many as the funds of the charity can support, are taught, with the assistance of the two senses of the sight and the touch, to speak, read, write, and cast accounts. The deafness seems the unconquerable part of the malady; for none deaf and dumb from the birth have ever been brought to hear. But the calamity of the want of the sense of hearing is much alleviated, — comparatively speaking it is removed, by giving the use of letters and of speech; by which they are admitted to the pleasure of social conversation, — are made capable of receiving both amusement and instruction from books, — are qualified to be useful both to themselves and the community, — and, what is most of all, the treasures of that knowledge which maketh wise unto salvation are brought within their

reach. The children admitted are kept under the tuition of the house five years, which is found to be the time requisite for their education. They are provided with lodging, board, and washing; and the only expense that falls upon the parent or the parish is in the article of clothing. The proficiency of those admitted at the first institution, in November 1792, exceeds the most sanguine expectations of their benefactors; and the progress of those who have been admitted at subsequent periods is in full proportion to the time. The number at present exceeds not twenty. There are at this time at least fifty candidates for admission; the far greater part of whom the slender finances of the society will not permit to be received.

I am persuaded that this simple statement of the object of the charity, the success with which the good providence of God has blessed its endeavours, within the narrow sphere of its abilities, and the deficient state of its funds, is all that it is necessary or even proper for me to say to excite you to a liberal contribution for the support of this

excellent institution, and the furtherance and extension of its views. You profess yourselves the disciples of that Master who during his abode on earth in the form of a servant went about doing good, — who did good in that particular species of distress in which this charity attempts to do it, — and who, seated now at the right hand of God, sends down his blessing upon those who follow his steps, and accepts the good that is done to the least of those whom he calls his brethren as done unto himself.

SERMON XII.

JOHN, xiii. 34.

A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

IN that memorable night when divine love and infernal malice had each their perfect work, — the night when Jesus was betrayed into the hands of those who thirsted for his blood, and the mysterious scheme of man's redemption was brought to its accomplishment, Jesus, having finished the paschal supper, and instituted those holy mysteries by which the thankful remembrance of his oblation of himself is continued in the church until his second coming, and the believer is nourished with the food of everlasting life, the body and blood of the

crucified Redeemer; when all this was finished, and nothing now remained of his great and painful undertaking but the last trying part of it, to be led like a sheep to the slaughter, and to make his life a sacrifice for sin, — in that trying hour, just before he retired to the garden, where the power of darkness was to be permitted to display on him its last and utmost effort, Jesus gave it solemnly in charge to the eleven apostles (the twelfth, the son of perdition, was already lost; he was gone to hasten the execution of his intended treason), — to the eleven, whose loyalty remained as yet unshaken, Jesus in that awful hour gave it solemnly in charge, "to love one another, as he had loved them:" And because the perverse wit of man is ever fertile in plausible evasions of the plainest duties, — lest this command should be interpreted in after ages as an injunction in which the apostles only were concerned, imposed upon them in their peculiar character of the governors of the church, our great Master, to obviate any such wilful misconstruction of his dying charge, declared it to be his pleasure and his meaning, that the exercise of mutual love, in all ages

and in all nations, among men of all ranks, callings, and conditions, should be the general badge and distinction of his disciples. "By this shall all men know that ye are *my* disciples, if ye love one another." And this injunction of loving one another as he had loved them, he calls a new commandment. "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another."

It was indeed in various senses a new commandment. First, as the thing enjoined was too much a novelty in the practice of mankind. The age in which our Saviour lived on earth was an age of pleasure and dissipation. Sensual appetite, indulged to the most unwarrantable excess, had extinguished all the nobler feelings. This is ever its effect when it is suffered to get the ascendant; and it is for this reason that it is said by the apostle to war against the soul. The refinements of luxury, spread among all ranks of men, had multiplied their artificial wants beyond the proportion of the largest fortunes; and thus bringing all men into the class of the necessitous, had universally induced that churlish habit of

the mind in which every feeling is considered as a weakness which terminates not in self; and those generous sympathies by which every one is impelled to seek his neighbour's good are industriously suppressed, as disturbers of the repose of the individual, and enemies to his personal enjoyment. This is the tendency and hath ever been the effect of luxury, in every nation where it hath unhappily taken root. It renders every man selfish upon principle. The first symptom of this fatal corruption is the extinction of genuine public spirit, — that is, of all real regard to the interests and good order of society; in the place of which arises that base and odious counterfeit, which, assuming the name of patriotism, thinks to cover the infamy of every vice which can disgrace the private life of man, by clamours for the public good, of which the real object all the while is nothing more than the gratification of the ambition and rapacity of the demagogue. The next stage of the corruption is a perfect indifference and insensibility, in all ranks of men, to every thing but the gratification of the moment. An idle peasantry subsist them-

selves by theft and violence; and a voluptuous nobility squander, on base and criminal indulgences, that superfluity of store which should go to the defence of the country in times of public danger, or to the relief of private distress. In an age therefore of luxury, such as that was in which our Saviour lived on earth, genuine philanthropy being necessarily extinguished, what is far beyond ordinary philanthropy, the religious love of our neighbour, rarely if ever will be found.

Nor was it missing only in the manners of the world, — but in the lessons of the divines and moralists of that age mutual love was a topic out of use. The Jews of those times were divided in their religious opinions between the two sects of the Pharisees and the Sadducees. The Sadducees were indeed the infidels of their age; they denied the existence of any immaterial substance, — of consequence they held that the human soul is mortal; and they denied the possibility of a resurrection. Their disciples were numerous among the great and voluptuous; but they

never had any credit with the body of the people. The popular religion was that of the Pharisess; and this, as all must know who read the New Testament, was a religion of form and show, — if that indeed may be called a religion, of which the love of God and man made no essential part. Judge whether *they* taught men to love one another, who taught ungrateful children to evade the fifth commandment with an untroubled conscience, and to defraud an aged parent of that support which by the law of God and nature was his due. In respect therefore of both these circumstances, that it prescribed what was neglected in the practice of mankind, and what was omitted in the sermons of their teachers, our Lord's injunction to his disciples, to love one another, was a new commandment. But the novelty of it consisted more particularly in this, — that the disciples were required to love one another after the manner, and, if the frailty of human nature might so far aspire, in the degree in which Christ loved them: "As I have loved you, that ye also love one another." Christians are to adjust their

love to one another to the measure and example of Christ's love to them. Christ's love was perfect as the principle from which it flowed, the original benignity of the Divine character. The example of this perfect love in the life of man was a new example; and the injunction of conformity to this new example might well be called a new commandment. Otherwise, the commandment that men should love one another, considered simply in itself, without reference to the deficiencies in the manners of the age, or to the perfection of Christ's example, had been no new precept of revealed religion. This is a point which seems to be generally mistaken. Men are apt, upon all occasions, to run into extremes; and it has been too much the practice of preachers in these later ages, in their zeal to commend what every one will indeed the more admire the more he understands it, to heighten the encomium of the Christian system, by depreciating, not only the lessons of the heathen moralists, but the moral part of the Mosaic institution. They consider not that the peculiar excellence of the Christian system

lies much more in doctrine than in precept. Our Saviour indeed, and his apostles after him, took all occasions of reproving the vices of mankind, and of inculcating a punctual discharge of the social duties; and the morality which they taught was of the purest and the highest kind. The practice of the duties enjoined in their precepts is the end for which their doctrines were delivered. It is always therefore to be remembered, that the practice of these duties is a far more excellent thing in the life of man, far more ornamental of the Christian profession, than any knowledge of the doctrine without the practice; as the end is always more excellent than the means. Nay, the knowledge of the doctrines, without an attention to the practical part, is a thing of no other worth than as it may be expected some time or other to produce repentance. But this end of bringing men to right conduct — to habits of temperance and sobriety — to the mutual exercise of justice and benevolence — to honesty in their dealings and truth in their words — to a love of God, as the protector of the just — to a rational fear of him, as

the judge of human actions, — the establishment of this practical religion is an end common to Christianity with all the earlier revelations, — with the earliest revelations to the patriarchs, with the Mosaic institution, and with the preachings of the prophets: And the peculiar excellency of Christianity cannot be placed in that which it hath in common with all true religions, but rather in the efficacy of the means which it employs to compass the common end of all, the conversion of the lost world to God. The efficacy of these means lies neither in the fulness nor the perspicuity of the precepts of the gospel, though they are sufficiently full and entirely perspicuous; but the great advantage of the Christian revelation is, that, by the large discovery which it makes of the principles and plan of God's moral government of the world, it furnishes sufficient motives to the practice of those duties, which its precepts, in harmony with the natural suggestions of conscience, and with former revelations, recommend. This is the true panegyric of the glorious revelation we enjoy, — that its doctrines are more immediately and

clearly connected with its end, and more effectual for the attainment of it, than the precarious conclusions of human philosophy, or the imperfect discoveries of earlier revelations, — that the motives by which its precepts are enforced are the most powerful that might with propriety be addressed to free and rational agents. It is commonly said, and sometimes strenuously insisted, as a circumstance in which the ethic of all religions falls short of the Christian, that the precept of universal benevolence, embracing all mankind, without distinction of party, sect, or nation, had never been heard of till it was inculcated by our Saviour. But this is a mistake. Were it not that experience and observation afford daily proof how easily a sound judgment is misled by the exuberance of even an honest zeal, we should be apt to say that this could be maintained by none who had ever read the Old Testament. The obligation indeed upon Christians, to make the avowed enemies of Christianity the objects of their prayers and of their love, arises out of the peculiar nature of Christianity, considered as the

the expression " the law," in the mouth of a Jew, could carry no other meaning. To this it had been vain to allege " the love of God or man," had there been no express requisition of them in the law, notwithstanding the confessed natural excellence of the things; because the question was not about natural excellence, but what was to be reckoned the first in authority and importance among the written commandments. Those masters of sophistry with whom our Saviour had been for some hours engaged felt themselves overcome, when he produced, from the books of *the law*, two maxims, which, forming a complete and simple summary of the whole, — and not only of the whole of the Mosaic law, but of every law which God ever did or ever will prescribe to man, — evidently claimed to be the first and chief commandments. The first, enjoining the love of God, is to be found, in the very words in which our Saviour recited it, in the sixth chapter of Deuteronomy, at the fifth verse. The second, enjoining the love of our neighbour, is to be found, in the very words in which our Saviour recited it, in the

nineteenth chapter of Leviticus, at the eighteenth verse.

The injunction, therefore, of conformity to his own example, is that which is chiefly new in the commandment of our Lord. As it is in this circumstance that the commandment is properly his, it is by nothing less than the conformity enjoined, or an assiduous endeavour after that conformity, that his commandment is fulfilled.

The perfection of Christ's example it is easier to understand than to imitate; and yet it is not to be understood without serious and deep meditation on the particulars of his history. Pure and disinterested in its motives, the love of Christ had solely for its end the happiness of those who were the objects of it. An equal sharer with the Almighty Father in the happiness and glory of the Godhead, the Redeemer had no proper interest in the fate of fallen man. Infinite in its comprehension, his love embraced his enemies; intense in its energy, it incited him to assume a frail and mortal nature — to undergo contempt and death;

constant in its operations, in the paroxysm of an agony the sharpest the human mind was ever known to sustain, it maintained its vigour unimpaired. In the whole business of man's redemption, wonderful in all its parts, in its beginning, its progress, and completion, the most wonderful part of all is the character of Christ, — a character not exempt from those feelings of the soul and infirmities of the body which render man obnoxious to temptation; but in which the two principles of piety to God and good-will to man maintained such an ascendancy over all the rest that they might seem by themselves to make the whole. This character, in which piety and benevolence, upon all occasions and in all circumstances, overpowered all the inferior passions, is more incomprehensible to the natural reason of the carnal man than the deepest mysteries, — more improbable than the greatest miracles, — of all the particulars of the gospel history the most trying to the evil heart of unbelief, — the very last thing, I am persuaded, that a ripened faith receives; but of all things the most important and the most necessary to be well understood and

firmly believed, — the most efficacious for the softening of the sinner's heart, for quelling the pride of human wisdom, and for bringing every thought and imagination of the soul into subjection to the righteousness of God. " Let this mind," says the apostle, " be in you,. which was also in Christ Jesus ;"—that mind which incited him, when he considered the holiness of God, and the guilt and corruption of fallen man, to say — " I come to do thy will, O God !" — that is, according to the same apostle's interpretation, to do that will by which we are sanctified, — to make the satisfaction for the sinful race which Divine justice demanded. Being in the form of God, he made himself of no reputation ; he divested himself of that external form of glory in which he had been accustomed to appear to the patriarchs in the first ages, in which he appeared to Moses in the bush, and to his chosen servants in later periods of the Jewish history, — that form of glory in which his presence was manifested between the cherubim in the Jewish sanctuary. He made himself of no reputation ; and, uniting himself to the holy fruit of Mary's womb,

he took upon him the form of a slave — of that fallen creature who had sold himself into the bondage of Satan, sin, and death; and, being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, — he submitted to the condition of a man in its most humiliating circumstances, — and carried his obedience unto death — the death even of the cross — the painful ignominious death of a malefactor, by a public execution. He who shall one day judge the world suffered himself to be produced as a criminal at Pilate's tribunal! He submitted to the sentence which the dastardly judge who pronounced it confessed to be unjust! The Lord of glory suffered himself to be made the jest of Herod and his captains! He who could have summoned twelve legions of angels to form a flaming guard around his person, or have called down fire from heaven on the guilty city of Jerusalem, on his false accusers, his unrighteous judge, the executioners, and the insulting rabble, made no resistance when his body was fastened to the cross by the Roman soldiers, — endured the reproaches of the chief priests and rulers — the taunts and revilings of the

Jewish populace! And this not from any consternation arising from his bodily sufferings, which might be supposed for the moment to deprive him of the knowledge of himself. He possessed himself to the last. In the height of his agonies, with a magnanimity not less extraordinary than his patient endurance of pain and contumely, he accepted the homage which in that situation was offered to him as the King of Israel; and, in the highest tone of confident authority, promised to conduct the penitent companion of his sufferings that very day to Paradise. What, then, was the motive which restrained the Lord of might and glory, that he put not forth his power for the deliverance of himself and the destruction of his enemies? — Evidently that which he avows upon his coming first into the world: "I come to do thy will, O God!" and, by doing of that will, to rescue man from wrath and punishment. Such is the example of resignation to God's will, of indifference to things temporal, of humility, and of love, we are called upon to imitate.

The sense of our inability to attain to the perfection of Christ's example, is a reason for much humility, and for much mutual forbearance, but no excuse for the wilful neglect of his command. It may seem that it is of little consequence to inculcate virtues which can be but seldom practised; and a general and active benevolence, embracing all mankind, and embracing persecution and death, may appear to come under this description. It may seem a virtue proportioned to the abilities of few, and inculcated on mankind in general to little purpose. But, though it may be given to few to make themselves conspicuous as benefactors of mankind, by such actions as are usually called great, because the effect of them on the welfare of various descriptions of the human race is immediate and notorious, the principle of religious philanthropy, influencing the whole conduct of a private man, in the lowest situations of life, is of much more universal benefit than is at first perceived. The terror of the laws may restrain men from flagrant crimes; but it is this principle alone that can make any man a useful member of society. This restrains

him, not only from those violent invasions of another's right which are punished by human laws, but it overrules the passions from which those enormities proceed; and the secret effects of it, were it but once universal, would be more beneficial to human life than the most brilliant actions of those have ever been to whom blind superstition has erected statues and devoted altars. As this principle is that which makes a man the most useful to others, so it is that alone which makes the character of the individual amiable in itself, — amiable, not only in the judgment of man, but in the sight of God, and in the truth of things; for God himself is love, and the perfections of God are the standard of all perfection.

SERMON XIII.

MATTHEW, xvi. 18, 19.

*I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.**

IT is much to be lamented, that the sense of this important text, in which our Lord for the first time makes explicit mention of his church, declaring, in brief but compreprehensive terms, the groundwork of the

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institution, the high privileges of the community, and its glorious hope, — it is much to be lamented that the sense of so important a text should have been brought under doubt and obscurity, by a variety of forced and discordant expositions, which prejudice and party-spirit have produced; while writers in the Roman communion have endeavoured to find in this passage a foundation for the vain pretensions of the Roman pontiff; and Protestants, on the other hand, have been more solicitous to give it a sense which might elude those consequences, than attentive to its true and interesting meaning. It will not be foreign to the purpose of our present meeting, if, without entering into a particular discussion of the various interpretations that have been offered, we take the text itself in hand, and try whether its true meaning may not still be fixed with certainty, by the natural import of the words themselves, without any other comment than what the occasion upon which they were spoken, and certain occurrences in the first formation of the church, to which they prophetically allude, afford.

Among the divines of the reformed churches, especially the Calvinists, it hath been a favourite notion, that St. Peter himself had no particular interest in the promises which seem in this passage to be made to him. The words were addressed by our Lord to St. Peter, upon the occasion of his prompt confession of his faith in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the living God; and this confession of St. Peter's was his answer to a question which our Lord had put to the apostles in general, "Whom say ye that I am?" — *which question had arisen out of* the answers they returned to an antecedent question, "Whom say men that I am?"

Now, with respect to this confession of St. Peter's, two of the most learned and acute among the commentators of antiquity, St. Chrysostom and St. Jerome, solicitous, as it should seem, for the general reputation of the apostles, as if they thought that at this early period no one of them could without blame be behind another in the fulness and the fervour of his faith, — from these, or from what motives it is not easy to divine, these two ancient commentators

have taken upon them to assert that St. Peter, upon this occasion, was but the spokesman of the company, and replied to our Lord's question "Whom say ye that I am?" in the name of all.

Improving upon this hint, modern expositors of the Calvinistic school proceed to a conclusion which must stand or fall with the assumption upon which it is founded. They say, since St. Peter's confession of his faith was not his own particular confession, but the general confession of the apostles, made by his mouth, the blessing annexed must be equally common to them all; and was pronounced upon St. Peter, not individually, but as the representative of the twelve; insomuch, that whatever the privileges may be which are described in my text as the custody of the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and the authority to bind and loose on earth with an effect that should be ratified in heaven, — whatever these privileges may be, St. Peter, according to these expositors, is no otherwise interested in them than as an equal sharer with the rest of the apostolic band.

told indeed, was general. "They said —" says the sacred historian. The question was about a plain matter of fact, concerning which there could not be two opinions. To the second question, "Whom say ye that I am?" Simon Peter is mentioned as the person who alone replied; as if, upon this point, no one else was ready with an answer. "Simon Peter answered and said—" Why is the mode of narration changed? why is it not said again — "They said?" Why is the speaker, and the speaker only, named in the one case rather than in the other, if the answer given was equally in both a common answer? Whence is it that the two other evangelists who have recorded this discourse, though far less minute in the detail of the particulars than St. Matthew, are both, however, careful to name St. Peter as the person who replied to the second question? and whence is it that not the most distant hint of any general concurrence of the apostles in St. Peter's sentiments is given by any one of these three writers?

Again, let the manner of our Lord's

reply to St. Peter be remarked. I would ask, in what way any one person of a numerous company can be more pointedly addressed—in what way can a discourse be more expressly confined and limited to one, in exclusion of the rest, than by calling that one person by his proper name, adding to his proper name his patronymic, and subjoining to that distinct compellation these express words, "I say unto thee?" But this was the manner of our Lord's reply to St. Peter's confession of his faith. "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah; and I say also unto thee—" Can it be supposed, that what was thus particularly said to Simon, son of Jonah, was equally said to another Simon, who was not the son of Jonah—to James, the son of Alpheus—to the sons of Zebedee, or any other persons present who were not named? I ask, by what other mode of compellation our Lord could have more distinctly marked St. Peter as the individual object of discourse, had he intended so to mark him? I ask, by what mode of compellation *was* St. Peter marked as the individual object of our Lord's discourse

upon another occasion, upon which no man in his senses ever doubted that St. Peter individually was addressed?—By the same mode of compellation which is used here: He was spoken to by his name and by his patronymic. "Simon, son of Jonah, lovest thou me?" Clearly therefore Peter individually was upon this occasion blessed by our Lord: Clearly therefore the confession which obtained the blessing was St. Peter's own.

It may perhaps be objected, that it is upon record in St. John's Gospel, that upon another occasion, the self-same confession, in the self-same terms, was made by St. Peter in the name of all.—I answer, it was upon a subsequent occasion; when, it may well be supposed, the satisfaction which our Lord upon this occasion had expressed in St. Peter's confession, had made a deep impression upon the minds of the apostles, and had brought them to a general concurrence in St. Peter's sentiments. But it is particularly to be remarked, that St. Peter upon this occasion, making a confession for himself, as I con-

tend, obtains a blessing: Afterwards, when the same confession was made by him in the name of all, no blessing follows it. The reason is obvious: The blessing due to the *first* confession was already St. Peter's: *He* had carried off the prize; and the rest of the apostles, more tardy, though not less sincere in the same faith, could have no share of what St. Peter had made his own.

But there is yet another argument that St. Peter upon this occasion spoke singly for himself; the force of which, however it hath passed unnoticed, is nothing short of demonstration. It is to be drawn from those words of our Lord, "I say unto thee, thou *art* Peter." Proper names, in the Hebrew language, were titles rather than names—words expressive of some peculiar adjunct of the persons by whom they were first borne. This was more particularly the case when a person's name was changed: The new name was always significant; and, for the most part, when given by Divine authority, predictive of some peculiarity in the character, the life,

the achievements, or the destiny, of the person on whom it was imposed. When Simon, son of Jonah, first became a follower of our Lord, our Lord gave him the name of *Cephas* or *the rock*, which passed into the equivalent word of the Greek language, *Petros*. Our Lord, upon this occasion of his confession of his faith, says to him — "Thou *art* Peter." The like form of words, — though the similarity appears not in our English Bibles, — but the like form of words was used by the patriarch Jacob, as the exordium of the blessing which he pronounced upon the most distinguished of his sons. "Thou *art* Judah; thy brethren shall praise thee;" — that is, Thou hast been rightly named Judah; the name properly belongs to thee; because thou wilt be what the name imports, the object of thy brethren's praise. So, here, "Thou *art* Peter," — that is, Thou hast been properly so named; for it now appears that thou hast about thee what the name imports. But how was it that this now appeared? Nothing had passed which could discover any peculiarity of St. Peter, unless it was the confession

which he had made of his faith in Jesus. This confession therefore was, by our Lord's own judgment, that which evinced the singular propriety of the name. But how should this confession evince the propriety of the name, if the merit of the confession was not at this time peculiar to St. Peter? If this confession contains the reason of the name, and yet was the common confession of all the apostles, made only by St. Peter's mouth, the inevitable consequence will be, that the name might have been *imposed with equal propriety* upon any one of the twelve, Judas Iscariot perhaps alone excepted;—which is in effect to say, that it was imposed upon Simon the son of Jonah, by the Omniscient discerner of the hearts of men, with no propriety at all.

Standing upon this firm ground of argument, we may now venture to assume a confident tone; nor scruple to assert, that St. Peter upon this occasion answered only for himself,—that the blessing he obtained was for himself singly, the reward of his being foremost in the faith which he con-

fessed *,—that, to be the carrier of the keys of the kingdom of heaven—to loose and bind on earth, in any sense which the expressions may bear in this passage—were personal distinctions of the venerable primate of the apostolic college, appropriated to him in positive and absolute exclusion of all other persons,—in exclusion of the apostles his contemporaries, and of the Bishops of Rome his successors. We need not scruple to assert, that any interpretation of this passage, or of any part of it, founded upon a notion that St. Peter upon this occasion spoke or was spoken to as the representative of the apostles, is groundless and erroneous.

Having laid this foundation, let us now

* Some sort of general confession of our Lord as Son of God had been made by different persons, upon different occasions, before this of St. Peter's,—by Nathaniel, upon his very first acquaintance with our Lord,—by the apostles, and others perhaps with them, in the boat, upon the lake of Gennesaret, after the storm. It is shown in the sequel, that this last fell far short of St. Peter's; and the same remark would apply to Nathaniel's. St. Peter was unquestionably foremost in the full distinct confession now made.

endeavour to fix the sense, first, of the promise to St. Peter, and in the next place, of the promise to the church.

The promise to St. Peter consists of these two articles,—that the keys of the kingdom of heaven should be given to him; and that whatsoever he should bind or loose on earth should be bound or loosed in heaven.

The keys of the kingdom of heaven here promised to St. Peter, by the principles we have laid down for the exposition of this text, must be something quite distinct from that with which it hath generally been confounded—the power of the remission and retention of sins, conferred by our Lord, after his resurrection, upon the apostles in general, and transmitted through them to the perpetual succession of the priesthood. This is the discretionary power lodged in the priesthood of dispensing the sacraments, and of granting to the penitent and refusing to the obdurate the benefit and comfort of absolution. The object of this power is the individual upon

whom it is exercised, according to the particular circumstances of each man's case. It was exercised by the apostles in many striking instances: It is exercised now by every priest, when he administers or withholds the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper, or, upon just grounds, pronounces or refuses to pronounce upon an individual the sentence of absolution.

St. Peter's custody of the keys was quite another thing. It was a temporary, not a perpetual authority: Its object was not individuals, but the whole human race. The kingdom of heaven upon earth is the true church of God. It is now therefore the Christian church: Formerly the Jewish church was that kingdom. The true church is represented in this text, as in many passages of holy writ, under the image of a walled city, to be entered only at the gates. Under the Mosaic economy these gates were shut, and particular persons only could obtain admittance, — Israelites by birth, or by legal incorporation. The locks of these gates were the rites of the Mosaic law, which obstructed

the entrance of aliens. But, after our Lord's ascension, and the descent of the Holy Ghost, the keys of the city were given to St. Peter, by that vision which taught him, and authorized him to teach others, that all distinctions of one nation from another were at an end. By virtue of this special commission, the great apostle applied the key, pushed back the bolt of the lock, and threw the gates of the city open for the admission of the whole Gentile world, in the instance of Cornelius and his family. To this, and to this only, our Lord prophetically alludes, when he promises to St. Peter the custody of the keys.

With this, the second article of the promise, the authority to loose and bind, is closely connected. This again being, by virtue of our rule of interpretation, peculiar to St. Peter, must be a distinct thing from the perpetual standing power of discipline, conveyed upon a later occasion to the church in general, in the same figurative terms. St. Peter was the first instrument of Providence in dissolving the obligation of the Mosaic law in the ceremonial and of

binding it in the moral part. The rescript indeed for that purpose was drawn by St. James, and confirmed by the authority of the apostles in general, under the direction of the Holy Ghost; but the Holy Ghost moved the apostles to this great business by the suggestion and the persuasion of St. Peter, as we read in the fifteenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. And this was his particular and personal commission to bind and loose.

I must not quit this part of my subject without observing, that no authority over the rest of the apostles was given to St. Peter, by the promise made to him, in either or in both its branches; nor was any right conveyed to him which could descend from him to his successors in any see. The promise was indeed simply a prediction that he would be selected to be the first instrument in a great work of Providence, which was of such a nature as to be done once for all; and, being done, it cannot be repeated. The great apostle fulfilled his commission in his lifetime: He applied his key,—he turned

back the lock,—he loosed and he bound. The gates of the kingdom of heaven *are* thrown open,—the ceremonial law *is* abrogated—the moral *is* confirmed; and the successors of St. Peter in the see of Rome can give neither furtherance nor obstruction to the business.

So much for the promise to St. Peter. The promise to the church, which is next to be considered, consists likewise of two articles,—that it should be built upon a rock; and that, *being so built, the gates of* hell should not prevail against it.

The first part of the promise, that the church should be built upon a rock, is contained in those words of our Lord to St. Peter, "I say unto thee, thou art Peter; and upon this rock (or, as the words might be better rendered, "upon this self-same rock,") I will build my church;"—which may be thus paraphrased: "Thou hast now shown the propriety of the name which I gave thee, taken from a rock; for thou hast about thee that which hath in it the likeness of a rock; and upon this self-

same rocky thing I will build my church." We have already seen that the reason of the name of Peter, given to Simon, lay in the confession which he now made. In that confession, therefore, we must seek the rocky thing to which the name alluded. Of all natural substances, a rock, though not perhaps the most dense, is certainly the most durable, the least liable to internal decay, and the least obnoxious to destruction or damage by any external force; for which reason, the sacred writers often apply to rocky mountains the epithet of everlasting. Hence, a rock is the most apt image that the material world affords of pure unadulterated truth,—in its nature, than adamant more firm, more permanent, more insurmountable. These things being put together, what shall we find in St. Peter's confession which might be represented by a rock, but the truth of it? This, then, is the rock upon which our Lord promises to build his church,—the faith confessed by St. Peter, in a truth, firm, solid, and immutable.

This being the case, it will be necessary,

for the fuller explication of the promise, to consider the extent and the particulars of this faith of St. Peter's.

It is remarkable, that the apostles in general, upon a certain occasion, confessing a faith in Jesus as the Son of God, obtained no blessing. I speak not now of that confession which upon a subsequent occasion was made by St. Peter, in the name of all; but of a confession made before, by the apostles in a body, for any thing that appears, without St. Peter's intervention. We read, in the fourteenth chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel, that after the storm upon the lake of Gennesaret, which ceased upon our Lord's entering into the vessel, "They that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God." No blessing follows. Simon Peter, some short time after, confesses, in terms which to an inattentive reader might seem but equivalent; and he is blessed. The conclusion is inevitable, that more was contained in this confession of St. Peter's than in the prior confession of the apostles in the ship;—

more, therefore, than in a bare confession of Jesus as a son of God.

What that more was will easily be understood, if we take St. Peter's answer in connexion with our Lord's question, paying a critical attention to the terms of both. Our Lord puts his first question in these terms: "Whom do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?" Then he says—"Whom say ye that I am?" Simon Peter answers—"Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Our Lord, in the terms of his question, asserts of himself that he is the Son of Man: St. Peter's answer, therefore, connected with our Lord's question, amounts to this,—"Thou, who sayest rightly of thyself that thou art the Son of Man, art Christ, the Son of the living God." St. Peter therefore asserts these three things of Jesus,—that he was Christ; that he was the Son of Man; and that he was the Son of God. The Son of Man, and the Son of God, are distinct titles of the Messiah. The title of the Son of Man belongs to him as God the Son; the title of the Son of God belongs

rections, and assisted by his Spirit, upon the solid rock of the truth of St. Peter's faith. That faith was a faith in the Mediatorial offices of Christ, in his divinity, and in the mystery of the incarnation. Whatever may be raised by man upon any other foundation, however it may assume the name of a church, is no part of Christ's building, and hath no interest in these glorious promises. This deserves the serious attention of all who in any manner engage in the plantation of churches and the propagation of the gospel. By those who have the appointment of itinerant missionaries for the conversion of the heathen, it should be particularly attended to, in the choice of persons for so great an undertaking; and it deserves the conscientious attention of every such missionary, in the prosecution of his work. Whatever may be the difficulty of giving a right apprehension of the mysteries of our religion to savages, whose minds have never yet been raised to the contemplation of any higher object than the wants of the animal life,—the difficulty, great indeed, but not insuperable to him that worketh with us, must be encountered,

not prevail against his church, our Lord promises, not only perpetuity to the church, to the last moment of the world's existence, notwithstanding the successive mortality of all its members in all ages, — but, what is much more, a final triumph over the power of the grave. Firmly as the gates of Hades may be barred, they shall have no power to confine his departed saints, when the last trump shall sound, and the voice of the archangel shall thunder through the deep.

I have now gone through the exposition of my text, as much at large as the time would allow, though more briefly than the greatness of the subject might deserve. To apply the whole to the more immediate concerns of this assembly, I shall conclude with two remarks.

The first is, That the church, to which our Lord promises stability and a final conquest over the power of the grave, is the building raised by himself, as the master-builder, — that is, by persons commissioned by him, acting under his di-

shall we now find the successors of those earliest archbishops, once stars in the Son of Man's right hand? Where are those boasted seals of Paul's apostleship, the churches of Corinth and Philippi? Where are the churches of Jerusalem and Alexandria? — But is there need that we resort, for salutary warning, to the examples of remote antiquity? Alas! where at this moment is the church of France? — her altars demolished — her treasures spoiled — her holy things profaned — her persecuted clergy and her plundered prelates wanderers on the earth! Let us take warning by a visitation that is come so near our doors. Let us not defraud ourselves of the benefit of the dreadful example, by the miserable subterfuge of a rash judgment upon our neighbours, and an invidious comparison of their deservings with our own. Let us not place a vain confidence in the purer worship, the better discipline, and the sounder faith, which for two centuries and an half we have enjoyed. These things are not our merits; they are God's gifts; and the security we may derive from them will depend upon the use we make of them.

Let us not abate — let us rather add to our zeal for the propagation of the gospel in distant parts; but let us not forget that we have duties nearer home. Let us of the ministry give heed to ourselves and to our flocks; let us give an anxious and diligent attention to their spiritual concerns. Let us all — but let the younger clergy, more especially, beware how they become secularized in the general cast and fashion of their lives. Let them not think it enough to maintain a certain frigid decency of character, abstaining from the gross scandal of open riot and criminal dissipation, but giving no farther attention to their spiritual duties than may be consistent with the pursuits and pleasures of the world, and may not draw them from a fixed residence in populous cities, at a distance from their cures, or a wandering life in places of public resort and amusement, where they have no call, and where the grave dignified character of a parish priest is ill exchanged for that of a fashionable trifler. We know the charms of improved and elegant society. Its pleasures in themselves are innocent; but they are

dearly bought at the expense of social and religious duty. If we have not firmness to resist the temptations they present, when the enjoyment is not to be obtained without deserting the work of the ministry in the places to which we are severally appointed, because our lot may have chanced to fall in the retirement of a country town, or perhaps in the obscurity of a village, the time may come, sooner than we think, when it shall be said — Where is now the church of England? Let us betimes take warning. "As many as *I love, I rebuke and chasten,*" said our Lord to the church of Laodicea, whose worst crime it was that she was "neither hot nor cold." "Be zealous, therefore, and repent. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

SERMON XIV.

1 CORINTHIANS, ii. 2.

*For I have determined not to know any thing among you save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.**

AMONG various abuses in the Corinthian church, which this epistle, as appears from the matter of it, was intended to reform, a spirit of schism and dissension, to which an attempt to give a new turn to the doctrines of Christianity had given rise, was in itself the most criminal, and in its consequences the most pernicious. Who the authors of this evil were, is not mentioned, and it were idle to inquire. They were run after in their day; but their names have been long

* Preached in the Cathedral Church of Gloucester, at a public ordination of priests and deacons.

since forgotten; nor is any thing remembered of them but the mischief which they did. The general character of the men, and the complexion of their doctrine, may easily be collected from this and the subsequent epistle. They were persons who, without authority from heaven, had taken upon themselves to be preachers of the gospel. The motive from which they had engaged in a business for which they were neither qualified nor commissioned, was not any genuine zeal for the propagation of the truth, nor any charitable desire to reclaim the profligate and to instruct the ignorant; but the love of gain — of power and applause, — the desire, in short, of those advantages which ever attend popularity in the character of a teacher. A scrupulous adherence to the plain doctrine of the gospel had been inconsistent with these views, since it could only have exposed them to persecution. Whatever therefore the Christian doctrine might contain offensive to the prejudice of Jew or Gentile, they endeavoured to clear away by figurative interpretations, by which they pretended to bring to light the hidden sense of mysterious ex-

pressions, which the first preachers had not explained. While they called themselves by the name of Christ, they required not that the Jew should recognize the Maker of the world, the Jehovah of his fathers, in the carpenter's reputed son; nor would they incur the ridicule of the Grecian schools, by maintaining the necessity of an atonement for forsaken and repented sins, and by holding high the efficacy of the Redeemer's sacrifice.

Such preaching was accompanied with no blessing. These pretended teachers could perform no miracles in confirmation of their doctrine: It was supported only by an affected subtlety of argument, and the studied ornaments of eloquence. To these arts they trusted, to gain credit for their innovations with the multitude. Not that the Corinthian multitude, more than the multitude of any other place, were qualified to enter into abstruse questions — to apprehend the force or to discern the fallacy of a long chain of argument — or to judge of the speaker's eloquence; but they had the art to persuade the people that they excelled in

argument and rhetoric. They told the people that their reasoning was such as must convince, and their oratory such as ought to charm: And the silly people believed them, when they bore witness to themselves. St. Paul they vilified, as a man of mean abilities, who either had not himself the penetration to discern I know not what hidden meaning of the revelation of which he was the minister, or had not the talents of a teacher in a sufficient degree to carry his disciples any considerable length; and, through his inability, had left untouched those treasures of knowledge which they pretended to disclose.

This sketch of the characters of the false teachers in the Corinthian church, and of the sort of doctrine which they taught, is the key to the apostle's meaning, in many passages of this epistle, in which, as in the text, he may seem to speak with disparagement of wisdom, learning, and eloquence, as qualifications of little significance in a preacher of the gospel, and as instruments unfit to be employed in the service of divine truth. In all these passages, a par-

ticular reference is intended to the arrogant pretensions of the false teachers, — to their affected learning, and counterfeit wisdom. It was not that, in the apostle's judgment, there is any real opposition between the truths of revelation and the principles of reason, — or that a man's proficiency in knowledge can be in itself an obstacle in the way of his conversion to the Christian faith, — or that an ignorant man can be qualified to be a teacher of the Christian religion; which are the strange conclusions which ignorance and enthusiasm, in these later ages, have drawn from the apostle's words: But he justly reprobates the folly of that pretended wisdom, which, instead of taking the light of revelation for its guide, would interpret the doctrines of revelation by the previous discoveries of human reason; and he censures the ignorance of that learning, which imagines that the nature of the self-existent Being, and the principles of his moral government of the world, are in such sort the objects of human knowledge, as, like the motions of the planets, or the properties of light, to be open to scientific investigation: And he means to express

how little is the amount and how light the authority of the utmost wisdom that may be acquired in the schools of human learning, in comparison of that illumination which was imparted to him by the immediate influence of the Divine Spirit, the fountain of truth and knowledge, on his mind.

That this is the true interpretation of what the apostle says, or hath been supposed to say, in disparagement of human learning, may appear from this consideration. We have, in the twelfth chapter of this epistle, a distinct enumeration of the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit; which were nine, it seems, in number. In a subsequent part of the same chapter, we have an enumeration of ecclesiastical offices, — nine also in number. The nine gifts, and the nine offices, taken in the order in which they are mentioned, seem to correspond; the first gift belonging to the first office, the second to the second, and so on *: *Only*, it is to be supposed, that as the authority of all in-

* *Vide* Appendix.

ferior offices is included in the superior, so the higher and rarer gifts contained the lower and more common. At the head of the list of offices, as the first in authority, stand "apostles and prophets;" by which last word are meant *expounders of the Scriptures;* — for, that the exposition of Scripture was the proper office of those who were called prophets in the primitive church, is a thing so well understood, and so generally acknowledged, that any particular proof of it upon the present occasion may be spared. Corresponding to these two offices, at the head of the catalogue of gifts, stand "the word of wisdom," and "the word of knowledge." The word of wisdom seems to have been a talent of arguing from the natural principles of reason, for the conviction and conversion of philosophical infidels. This was the proper gift of the apostles, who were to carry the glad tidings of salvation to distant nations, among which the light of revelation had either never shone, or had at least for ages been extinguished. The word of knowledge was the talent of holding learned arguments from the ancient prophecies, and other writings of the Old

Testament, to silence the objections of Jewish adversaries, and to demonstrate the consistency of the gospel with former revelations. This was the proper gift of those who were appointed to expound the Scriptures in congregations of the faithful, once formed by the preaching of the apostles. These persons, by the way, bore the name of prophets, because their office in the church stood in the same relation to the office of the apostles as that of the prophets under the law to the office of Moses. The Jewish prophets were only guardians and expounders of the law prescribed by Moses, and of the revelation which he published. The prophets in the primitive church were not the publishers of the gospel, but expounders of what the apostles had previously taught. The apostolic gift, the word of wisdom, consisted, it should seem, in an intuitive knowledge of philosophic truth, and an insight into the harmony of the faith which the apostles taught with what are called the principles of natural religion. The prophetic gift, the word of knowledge, consisted in a prompt recollection of all parts of the sacred writings, and

an insight into the harmony of the different revelations. It pleased God to commit the first preaching of the gospel to men whose former occupations and conditions may be supposed to have excluded them from the pursuits and the attainments of learning, and from the advantages of education, "that the excellency of the power might be of God — not of them." But it is evident that these gifts, with which he was pleased to adorn the two first offices in the Christian church, were to those first preachers instead of education: For the qualities of a penetrating judgment in abstruse questions, and a ready recollection of written knowledge, which the first preachers enjoyed by the immediate influence of the Holy Spirit, are in kind the very same which men to whom this supernatural assistance is denied may with God's blessing acquire in a less degree, by long and diligent study. These talents existed unquestionably in the minds of the first inspired preachers in a degree in which by the mere industry of study they cannot be attained. The apostles were by infinite degrees the best-informed of all philosophers; and the prophets of the primitive

lamp of knowledge in the minds of uneducated men? The reason of this extraordinary interposition in the early ages was, that, for the first promulgation of the gospel, no abilities to be acquired by education were sufficient for the teacher's office: And the reason that this extraordinary interposition hath long since ceased is, that Christianity having once taken root in the world, those inferior abilities which may be attained by a diligent improvement of our natural talents are now sufficient for its support. But in all ages, if the objections of infidels are to be confuted, — if the scruples of believers themselves are to be satisfied, — if Moses and the prophets are to be brought to bear witness to Jesus of Nazareth, — if the calumnies of the blaspheming Jews are to be repelled, and their misinterpretations of their own books confuted, — if we are to be "ready," that is, if we are to be qualified and prepared, "to give an answer to every man that asketh us a reason of the hope that is in us," — a penetration in abstruse questions — a quickness in philosophical discussion — a critical knowledge of the ancient languages — a

familiar acquaintance with the Jewish history, and with all parts of the sacred writings —a sound judgment, a faithful memory, and a prompt elocution — are talents without which the work of an evangelist will be but ill performed. When they are not infused by inspiration, they must be acquired by diligence in study and fervency in prayer. And if any in the present age imagine, that, wanting the advantages of education, they may be qualified for preachers of the gospel, they are to be considered as enthusiasts; unless, like the apostles, they can appeal to a confirmation of their word by "signs and wonders following." Inspiration is the only means by which they may be qualified for the business in which they presume to meddle; and of a real inspiration, the power of miracles is the proper sign and inseparable concomitant.

It is the usual plea of these deluded men, when they would assert their sufficiency while they confess their ignorance, that, however deficient they may be in other knowledge, they *know Christ*. And God

forbid, that, in a country professing Christ's religion, Christ should not be known by every one in the degree necessary to his own salvation, — that any one should not so know Christ as to have a right apprehension of the necessary articles of the Christian faith — right notions of his duty to God and to his neighbour — a stedfast faith in God's promises through Christ — such views, in short, of the Christian doctrine, as may give it its full effect upon his heart and practice. This knowledge of Christ, the most illiterate hath, or ought to have, in a Christian country; and he who hath it not is culpable in his ignorance. But this knowledge, without which no one's condition is secure, is not that which may authorize the private Christian to assume the office of a public teacher.

It may indeed be made a question whether any degree of knowledge may justify the officious interference of an individual, of his own pure motion, in a business of such serious concern to the community; for, if it be allowed in any society that mere ability constitutes a right

to act in any particular capacity, the consequence will be, that every man will be justified in the usurpation of any office in the state, by his own opinion of his own sufficiency. The extravagance and the danger of this principle, applied in the civil departments, would be readily perceived. A man who from a conceit of his own abilities should take upon him to play the magistrate, the general, or the privy counsellor, without a commission regularly obtained from the source of civil power, would soon be shut up in some proper place, where he might act his fooleries in secret, without harm to his neighbour or public discredit to himself. The reason that the extravagance and danger of the same principle is not equally perceived when it is applied in the ecclesiastical polity, and that disturbers of the ecclesiastical constitution are suffered to go loose, while other madmen are confined, is only this, — that the interests of the church are not so seriously considered as those of the state, because its good government and its disorders come not so immediately home to the particular interests of each member of the community.

I mean not, however, at present to enter into the question, what more than mere sufficiency may be requisite to give a man authority to set up as a public teacher of what he really knows; or how far the rights of a commission actually existing may be infringed by the laic's invasion of the preacher's chair. When it is considered that not fewer than nine different ecclesiastical offices, distinguished by their different gifts, appear to have been subsisting at Corinth when this epistle was written, — and that, by the consent of the most learned in ecclesiastical chronology, this epistle was written so early as the fifty-seventh year of our Lord, — it should seem that the formation of a church — the constitution of an hierarchy, composed of different orders, which orders were appointed to distinct duties, and invested with distinct rights — was a thing of so great antiquity as may leave no doubt remaining with any reasonable man of the divine authority of the institution.

But what I at present insist upon is this, — that that knowledge of Christ by which a man may be qualified to bear the office

of a teacher cannot be separated from other branches of knowledge to which uneducated men can in these days make no pretensions. I contend that it never was separated: For the word of wisdom, and the word of knowledge, in the apostles and primitive prophets, consisted not in a knowledge of revelation *only*, — but, as their writings testify, in a general comprehension of all that other men acquire in a less degree by education, — in those branches at least of human knowledge which are connected with theology and morals.

They were, perhaps, not knowing in the details of natural philosophy; for the argument for the being and the providence of God, from the visible order and harmony of the universe, is the same, by whatever laws its motions may be carried on. They were not physicians or anatomists; because they had the power of curing diseases and healing wounds without medicine or art. But they were profound metaphysicians — the best of moralists — well-informed historians — accurate logicians — and excellent in that strain of eloquence which is calcu-

lated for the conveyance of instruction, the enforcement of duty, the dissuasion of vice, the conviction of error, and the defence of truth. And whoever pretends to teach without any of these qualifications, hath no countenance from the example of the apostles, who possessed them all in an eminent degree, not from education, but from a higher source.

St. Paul, indeed, says of himself, that when he first preached the gospel to the Corinthians, "he came not unto them with excellency of speech or of wisdom;" —that is, he came not, like the false teachers, making an ostentatious display of studied eloquence, nor boasting his proficiency in philosophy: He required not that the Corinthians should receive the testimony of God, which he delivered to them as the testimony of God, because he who delivered it was a knowing man, or an accomplished orator: He rested not the evidence of his doctrine upon mere argument, nor did he think to persuade by mere eloquence; for argument alone, although it might indeed evince the consistency

and reasonableness of the doctrine, could never amount to a proof of its heavenly origin; and the apostles had means of persuasion more powerful than eloquence —which, by the way, no modern teacher hath: His knowledge and eloquence, however necessary, were still in him but secondary qualifications; and so little was he ambitious of the fame of learning, that he determined not "to know any thing among them save Jesus Christ, and him crucified."

But consider what this knowledge of the apostle really contained. "To know Jesus Christ, and him crucified," was to know,—not simply to believe, but to know in such a manner as to be able to teach others, that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah announced by the prophets from the beginning of the world; and to understand that the sufferings of the Messiah were the means appointed by God for man's deliverance from sin and damnation. This knowledge, therefore, of Jesus Christ, and him crucified, to which St. Paul laid claim, contained an accurate knowledge of the ancient pro-

phecies — a clear apprehension of their necessary reference to the Messiah — a discernment of their exact completion in the person of Jesus — and an insight into that great mystery of godliness, the expiation of the actual sins of men, and the cleansing of man's sinful nature, by the shedding of the blood of Christ.

And who is sufficient for these things? That no study can attain this knowledge of Christ in the degree in which the apostles possessed it, he who confesses not hath studied Christ to little purpose: But he who imagines that Christ may thus be known by men uninformed both by inspiration and education, or imagines that when inspiration is wanting education may contribute nothing at all in aid of the deficiency, — that is, to make my meaning very plain, he who imagines that, of uninspired men, the learned and the unlearned are equally qualified to be teachers of the word of God, — he who builds this extravagant opinion upon the terms in which the apostle speaks of the knowledge of Christ as the only knowledge to which he himself made pre-

tensions, only proves that more learning is necessary than he is aware of to the right apprehension of this single text.

Inferences naturally flow from the doctrine which hath been asserted, of high concern to every one in this assembly. We who, with however weak ability, fill the high station of the prophets in the primitive church, — you who are this day to be admitted to a share in that sacred office, — are admonished of the diligence with which we must devote ourselves to study, and of the assiduity which we must use in prayer to acquit ourselves of the duties of our calling. The laity are admonished of the folly and the danger of deserting the ministry of those who have been rightly separated to that holy service, in the vain hope of edifying under *their* instruction who cannot be absolved of the crime of schism upon any better plea than that of ignorance. To allege the apostles as instances of illiterate preachers, is of all fallacies the grossest. Originally, perhaps, they were men of little learning — fishermen — tent-makers — excisemen: But when they began

to preach, they no longer were illiterate; they were rendered learned in an instant, without previous study of their own, by miracle. The gifts which we find placed by an apostle himself at the head of their qualifications were evidently analogous to the advantages of education. Whatever their previous character had been, the apostles, when they became preachers, became learned: They were of all preachers the most learned. It is therefore by proficiency in learning, accompanied with an unreserved submission of the understanding to the revealed word, — but it is by learning, not by the want or the neglect of it, that any modern teacher may attain to some distant resemblance of those inspired messengers of God.

APPENDIX.

1 CORINTHIANS, xii. 8, 9, 10.

THE word of wisdom, — the talent of arguing from the natural principles of reason, for the conversion of philosophical infidels. *The word of knowledge*, — the talent of holding learned arguments from the ancient prophecies, and the writings of the Old Testament, for the conversion of Jewish infidels. *Faith*, — a depth and accuracy of understanding in the general scheme of the Christian revelation, for the improvement and edification of believers. *The gifts of healing*, and *the working of miracles*, — for the purpose of making new converts, and displaying the extent of the power of Christ. *Prophecy*, or the talent of foreseeing future events, — for the purpose of providing against the calamities, whether worldly or spiritual, that might threaten particular churches; such as famines, pestilence, wars, persecutions, heresies. *Discerning of spirits*, — for the better government of the church. And *the gift of tongues*, and *the interpretation of tongues*, which seem to have been very generally dispersed, — that every Christian might be qualified to argue with the learned Jews in the

synagogues, from the original Scriptures, especially when the Jew thought proper to appeal from the Greek of the Septuagint to the Hebrew text.

In these very remarkable passages, the apostle reckons up nine distinct gifts of the Holy Spirit, all of the extraordinary kind. In the twenty-eighth verse he enumerates just as many ecclesiastical offices. The gifts and the offices, taken in the order in which they are mentioned, seem to correspond.

GIFTS.	OFFICES.
1. The word of wisdom,	Apostles.
2. The word of knowledge,	Prophets, *i.e.* expounders of the Scriptures of the Old Testament.
3. Faith,	Teachers of Christianity.
4. Miracles,	Workers of miracles.
5. Healing,	Healers.
6. Prophecies, or predictions.	Helps—Ἀντιλήψεις; such as Mark, Tychicus, Onesimus, &c.
7. Discerning of spirits,	Governments — Κυβερνήσεις.
8. Tongues, 9. Interpretation of tongues,	Gifted with tongues in various ways.

The fourth and fifth gifts, miracles and healing, seem to have changed places in the ninth and tenth verses. Miracles, I think, must take place as the *genus*, and healing must rank below it as the *species*. Accordingly, in the twenty-eighth verse, miracles or powers are mentioned before healings. With this slight alteration, the list of gifts in the eighth, ninth, and tenth verses, seems to answer exactly to the list of offices in the twenty-eighth; only, it is to be supposed, that as all inferior offices are included in the superior, so all the higher and rarer gifts contain the lower and more common.

Dr. Lightfoot, if I mistake not, hath remarked this parallelism of gifts and offices, in his "Horæ Hebraicæ."

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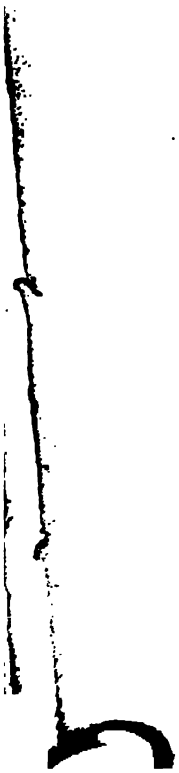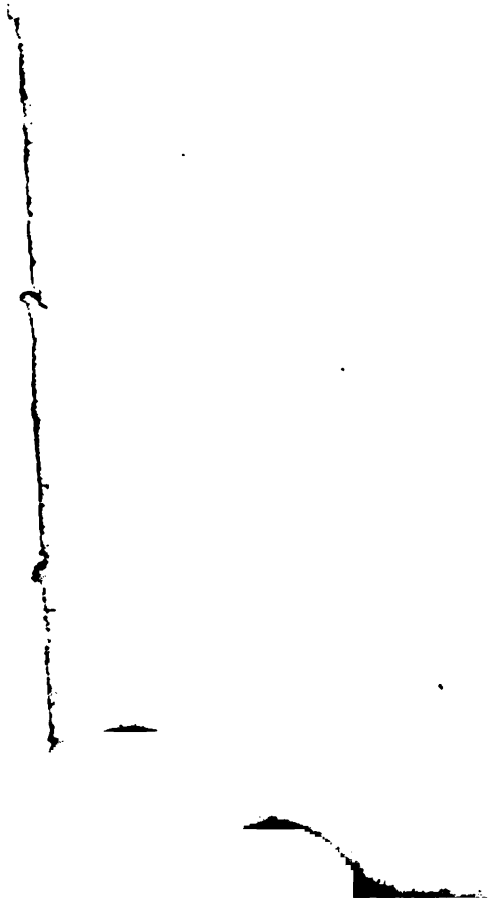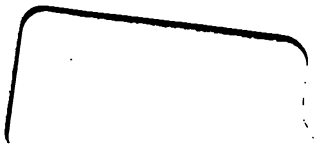
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